

COMPLETE READY TO PLAY GAME INSIDE
THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY ADVENTURE GAMING

No. 10

\$4.00

Ares

STORY and GAME FEATURE

HARRY HARRISON'S THE RETURN OF THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT

Slippery Jim diGriz faces a deadly
maze controlled by a computer
programmed to kill.

Articles on
**UNIVERSE
DELTA VEE**
Complete Adventure for
DragonQuest
Critiques of
Outland ★ Dragonslayer
and Escape from New York



Preview of
StarTrader
and
Ghostship





CREATIVE DIRECTOR Redmond A. Simonsen

MANAGING EDITORS Michael E. Moore
Robert J. Ryer

MANAGING ART DIRECTOR Manfred F. Milkuhn

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: John Boardman, John H. Butterfield, Greg Costikyan, Eric Goldberg, Brad E. Hessel, Christopher John, Nick Karp, Gerry Klug, Thomas Pecorini, Bruce Shelley, Susan Schwartz, Eric Smith. **EDITORIAL STAFF:** Rich DiNardo, Carolyn Felder, Justin Leites, Deborah C. Ritchie. **GRAPHIC PRODUCTION:** Margie Gray, Ted Koller, Ken Stec. **MARKETING AND WHOLESALE:** Jerry Glichenhouse (mgr.), Theresa Canto, Richard Hom, Anna Lombardo. **STRATEGIC STUDIES:** Mark Herman. **DATA PROCESSING:** Paul Bandhold (mgr.), Christine Fletcha, Brenda Freeman, Yvette Middleton, Judith Ortiz. **FINANCE:** Beatrice Li (mgr.), Mohamed Mohamed, Oonagh Neal, Barbara Nolan. **WAREHOUSE:** Samuel Small, Jr. (mgr.), Henry Sarnowski. **PRODUCTION:** Kenneth T. Hedges (mgr.), Brian Walls. **CUSTOMER SERVICE:** Kathy Tennyson (mgr.), Lynne T. Pridham, Andrew Swiderski. **PERSONNEL:** Trish Christin. **RECEPTIONISTS:** Derrick Avery, Maureen Walls.

PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Christopher R. Wagner

Magazine Printing: Wellesley Press, Framingham, Massachusetts
Game Component Printing: Reflex Offset, Garden City, Long Island
Die Cutting: Friedman Die-Cutters, New York

ARES Magazine is copyright © 1981 by Simulations Publications, Inc. Printed in U.S.A. All rights reserved. All editorial and general mail should be sent to Simulations Publications, Inc., 257 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10010. **ARES** is published bi-monthly. One year (six issues) subscriptions are \$16.00. Please send checks or money orders only.

FOREIGN SALES: GREAT BRITAIN & EUROPEAN customers should place their orders for SPI products or subscriptions with Simpuls Ltd., Freepost, Oakfield House, 80 Oakfield Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, England WA 15 8EW, Tel. 061-941-4371. **AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND** residents should order through Military Simulations Pty. Ltd., 18 Foncena Street, Mordialloc, Victoria 3195, Australia, Tel. (03) 909-791. **CANADIAN** customers should order through International Games of Canada, 3227 Lenworth Drive, Mississauga, Ontario L4X 2G8, Canada, Tel. (416) 625-0131. **JAPANESE** customers should contact Post Hobby Co., 1-38, Yoyogi, Shibuka-Ku, Tokyo, Japan, Tel. (379) 4081.

ADVERTISING: Basic rate is \$800 per black & white page. Contact: SPAD, 257 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10010 for rate card. SPI reserves the absolute right to refuse any specific advertisement.

SUBMISSIONS: **ARES** welcomes submissions by established writers and designers. Contact: Managing Editor. SPI assumes no responsibility for material not specifically solicited.



THE MAGAZINE OF
SCIENCE FICTION
AND FANTASY
ADVENTURE GAMING

SIMULATION GAME

The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat

GREG COSTIKYAN

REDMOND A. SIMONSEN

Insert

FICTION

The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat

HARRY HARRISON

5

DRAGONQUEST ADVENTURE

The Camp of Alla-Akabar

GERRY KLUG

17

VARIANTS

DeltaVee Enhanced

JUSTIN LEITES

25

DESIGN NOTES

There's Only One Universe

GERRY KLUG

28

MUSE

REDMOND A. SIMONSEN

2

DESIGNER'S NOTES

STAFF

4

SCIENCE FOR SCIENCE FICTION

JOHN BOARDMAN, Ph.D.

10

FACTS FOR FANTASY

SUSAN SHWARTZ, Ph.D.

11

FILM & TELEVISION

CHRISTOPHER JOHN

12

MEDIA

DAVID J. SCHOW

14

BOOKS

GREG COSTIKYAN

14

DRAGONNOTES

GERRY KLUG

24

GAMES

ERIC GOLDBERG

30

FEEDBACK

JOHN H. BUTTERFIELD

33

ENCLOSURES: *The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat* map, counters and rules; Feedback card, subscription form.

Looking Ahead to Next Time

Ares nr. 10 will feature *Land of Faerie*, a strategic level simulation of the Third Fomorian War in which the Dark Elves and Dark Trolls struggle to seize the Places of Power in fair Albion. Material on Celtic myth and early British history will accompany the game; in addition there will be reviews, Science for Science Fiction, Facts for Fantasy, and much more.

When to Expect Nr. 11

Domestic Subscribers: If you have not received your copy of *Ares* nr. 11 by 11 December 1981, notify our Customer Service Department. Please include your Customer Code and issue of expiration, both of which should be found on this issue's mailing label, just above your name. **Foreign Subscribers:** Add eight weeks to the above date to allow for the tardigradous pace of international mail.

On the Cover

The immortal Stainless Steel Rat as portrayed by Timothy Truman, based on a concept by Redmond A. Simonsen.



With this issue, *Ares* and its brother magazine, *MOVES*, make slight course corrections in response to market information developed by feedback and by direct interview and reader comment at the recent Michi-Con and Origins conventions. As you can see by this issue, *Ares* will begin to include articles directly related to games (i.e., analysis, technique, variants, etc.). *MOVES* will no longer publish material related to science fiction and fantasy games — only military and political games. This change points both magazines more in the direction you've indicated: sf/f games treated in *Ares*; military games in *MOVES*.

By the way, as with all SPI magazines, articles and features are *not* restricted to SPI products — we want material on all publisher's games. So, if you're inclined to write game-related articles on widely played sf/f games (see our games rating chart for guidance), submit a non-returnable copy of your

manuscript to our Managing Editor along with a return postcard to notify you of acceptance.

We're looking for articles from 1500 to 5000 words in length. Pay rates are \$.02 or .03 per word (depending on whether you've been published with any frequency heretofore). For game-related articles, SPI buys all rights.

Late Flash: *DragonQuest* wins Best Fantasy Role-Playing Game Award. At Origins 81, the Academy of Adventure Gaming Art and Design gave *DragonQuest* top honors in role-playing for 1980! *Redmond*



SPI 257 Park Avenue South,
New York, N. Y. 10010
(212) 673-4103



SPI is a member of the Hobby Industry of America, The Adventure Games Division of the HIA, and the Game Manufacturers Association.

SPI is proud to announce



DRAGONSLAYER

A Fantastic Game of Quest and Adventure
based upon the exciting new motion picture
from Paramount Pictures Corp./Walt Disney Productions

A young sorcerer sets out upon a perilous journey to free a kingdom from the terror of earth's last dragon. Along his route he acquires weapons, charms, and true companions to aid him in his quest. Will he succeed or fall victim to bandits, the King's men, or the dragon itself? **Dragonslayer** is designed to appeal to knowledgeable fantasy adventure game players while at the same time remaining accessible to new gamers. This fast playing, self-contained adventure includes a full-color 17" x 22" map of Urland, 200 full-color playing pieces, easy-access rules, and Dragon lair displays, plus compartment plastic tray. \$15 at stores and game departments nationwide.

Dragonslayer is licensed by Paramount Pictures Corp./Walt Disney Productions,
© 1981 Paramount Pictures Corp./Walt Disney Productions. All rights reserved.

Galen



2



Valerian
of
Swanscombe



1



The Dragon
Vermithrax
Pejorative

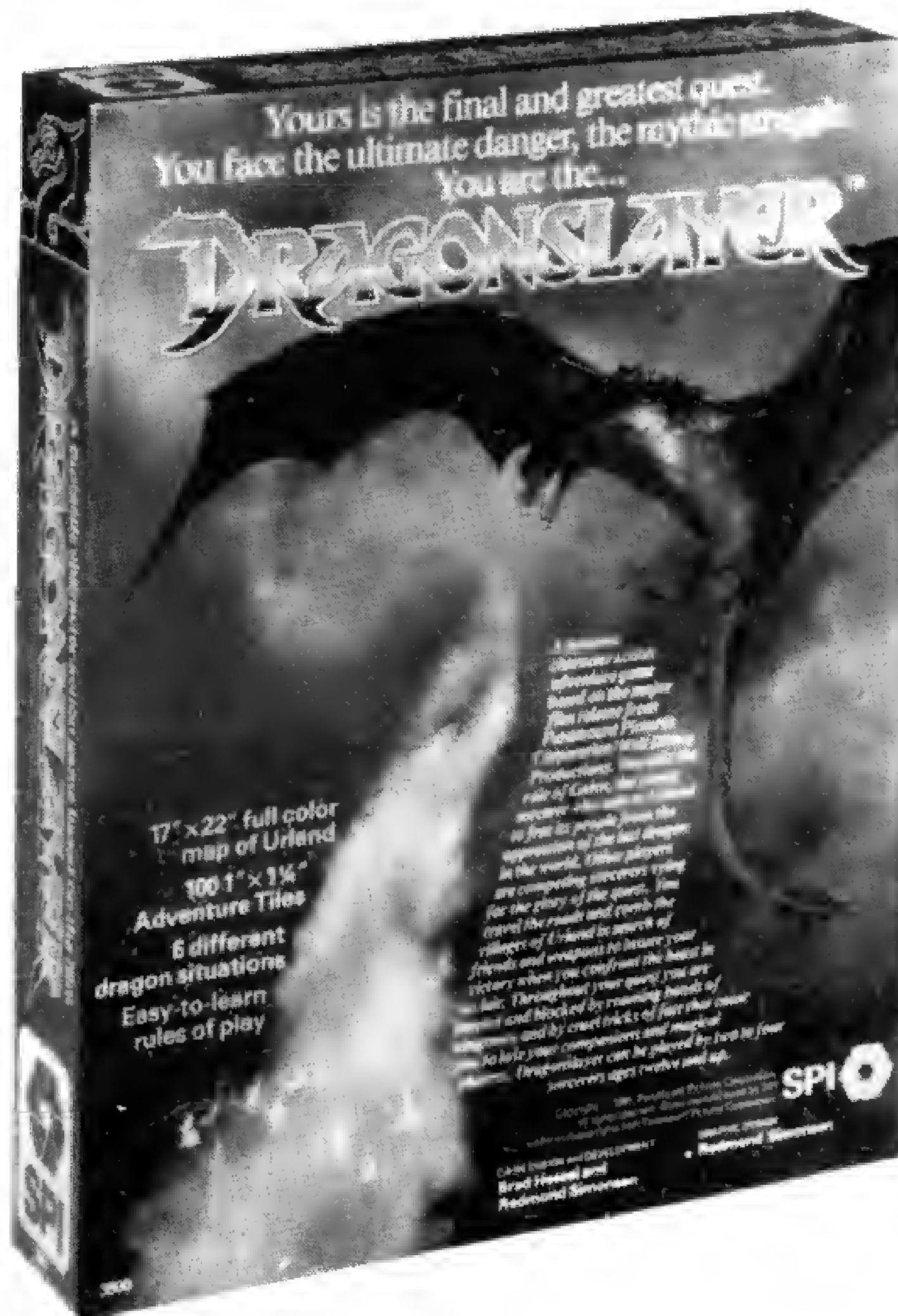
Sicarius
Draconum



Companion
Killed



Amulet of
Power



Designer's Notes

Universe Mini-Adventure #1: The Devil's Eye

Devil's Eye Horror Revealed!

SIDEWINDER (FP)—Survivors of the Devil's Eye (GLY-I) exploration party today described the tragic events of their visit last week to the unsettled planet during a press conference in Sidewinder Spaceport. Expedition leader George Bjorling told of the deaths of three members of this five-man team. Originally scheduled to conduct a low-orbit mapping of the planet only, the party decided to land the ship, the *Kaliningrad*, in this heavily vegetated north polar region of Devil's Eye. There they set out for a quick survey of the multitudinous life forms picked up by their scanners.

"I made no poor nonmand decision," admitted Bjorling. "We were not properly equipped for this type of exploration having no weapons more effective than an old-fashioned laser pistol." Bjorling went on to say that they encountered "a fierce and deadly collection of creatures composed of organic and metallic mechanical parts. I found two of three versions of some neomorphs.... One would be purely mammalian and docile while the same type of animal with a new steel-hard skin would attack ruthlessly. Win lost Barnes, Williams and Lawson to seemingly docile creatures that ripped open their expedition suits with blade-like fangs and claws."

After the conference, Bjorling and his surviving new member, Grace Bicklers, went into seclusion in a GmLapCo retreat at an undisclosed location on Sidewinder.

The preceding is a newspaper bulletin that the players in our first *Universe* mini-adventure receive at the beginning of play. The adventure was originally conceived solely for use at *Origins '87* but has proven so popular with playtesters that we are preparing it for inclusion in an upcoming issue of *Ares*.

The adventure sends a party of adventurers to Devil's Eye in the Gamma Leporis double-star system (27 light years from Sol) to investigate the strange life-forms reported by George Bjorling. With an ambition to learn vehicle and an excellent array of weapons, the party is better equipped than their predecessors to deal with the dangerous neomorphs in the jungles of Barnes River. The party must not only overcome the harsh environment, but must also discover the secrets behind the metallic life-forms. Look for this adventure in *Ares II* or *12*.

John H. Butterfield

Ghostship

Ghostship deals with the interception of an alien vessel passing near earth by the US

space shuttle Yorktown, and with the exploration of the dark, quiet rearmat in hopes of finding an inhabitants. During the preparation before playing the game, the player must determine what faction on earth will finance the trip, which will affect victory conditions. He then chooses his characters. He has not yet decided whether the player may pick all his characters freely or if some should be selected randomly. Each will possess various attributes, special skills and a classification type (i.e., scientist, politician, military specialist, newsmen, etc.). The characters' natures will influence the results of each encounter.

The game itself will be an interesting combination of the chit revealing process of *Clashed of Blood* and the paragraph system of *Voyage of the Pandora*. Chit will serve two purposes. They will design the shape of the ship by forcing certain passages of the ship to be closed off. Also, they will identify the "links" in each room or structure as they are entered. Each find chit will be cross-referenced to one of a hundred paragraphs which will identify what the object is or does. However, each paragraph will contain conditional dependent upon characters, previously discovered finds and time limitations. This approach will greatly expand the possibilities of each paragraph and make the game more intriguing over all.

Ultimately, the goal of the game will be attempting to encounter the aliens who built the ship. It will not be a simple task, and only the correct combination of events will accomplish this. Yet this will be the most interesting part of the game. Rules will be included to cover possibilities of communication, capture and combat. More often than not, the alien visitors will not be too pleased with having their ship ransacked and will retaliate in kind.

The game's victory conditions will be based on the amount of money and prestige the various finds are worth (the initial money). For example, a find with a high probability of being a weapon will be worth more to the Pentagon than to the UN. Some of the finds may even be relatively worthless. Of course, the greatest amount of points will be given for contacting the aliens. However, in making such contact, the characters may be recruited as well.

Right now, *Ghostship* is being designed for solitaire play. However, ideas for multiplayer versions are being worked out. In such a scenario, there would even be possibilities for the players to attack each other. Nonetheless, for the time being the emphasis of this designer's time is on the actual mechanics of the game itself.

Thomas Pecorini

Star Trader

Preliminary design work on *Star Trader* has been completed, and I am beginning work on the game's first prototype. Playtest should begin in a week or two. The game's components will include a 22" x 34" map depicting the star systems in play, 200 counters representing starships and planetary trade agencies, and a 16-page rules book which will be divided equally between rules and random events paragraph.

In *Star Trader* each of up to five players takes the role of the master of a merchant

vessel, traveling the spaceways with cargoes exotic and rare. Starting with one ship and limited financial resources, each player tries to build a fleet of starships, amass a network of planetary bases, and dominate the trade lanes of space.

Each turn in the game represents about three months. This time-scale was chosen for several reasons: I wanted the time-scale to be large enough so that the players would have a good shot at building a fleet in a scenario of moderate length. Also, this turned out to be long enough to allow for large price fluctuations. At the same time, however, the time-scale had to be small enough so that movement and the details of player interaction wouldn't become too abstract. Three month turns should work out on a happy solution.

Each turn the players buy and sell goods, negotiate with each other, react to unusual events, develop the network of trade agencies, and conduct acts of piracy aimed at making the other players' lives as difficult as possible. The players can also conduct a variety of illicit activities, such as smuggling, bribing customs, and evading law enforcement agencies.

I am working on the assumption that the far-reaching trade corporations of the future will be unscrupulous for the most part, and so the game emphasizes illegal activities, smuggling and piracy are common. Indeed, the quickest profits can be made by dealing in drugs and high-tech weapons. Naturally, a high degree of risk is associated with such ventures, however.

All markets, especially those for illegal goods, are highly volatile, every time a ship unloads its cargo, prices fluctuate dramatically. Timing and outwitting the other players have great importance, a player's profit on a voyage depends as much on when he gets to a star (and who gains there first) as on what he is carrying.

In addition to competition in trade, the players interact more directly, sabotaging each other's ships, subverting each other's crews, and even attacking each other's ships as they cruise between stars.

Banking and investment systems are also integrated into the game. Although these systems are abstract, they give the players more options to consider, and contribute to the variety of choices presented in the game. I also think that letting the players take loan out of various interest rates is a constant source of tension and excitement.

A detailed random-event system, using the *Voyage of the Pandora* paragraph format, will be included in the game. The variety of events presented should give each playing a distinct flavor. Each turn the players will be presented with smuggling opportunities, wars with Federation space troopers, and a multitude of unique incidents, from revolutions to meteor swarms.

This random-event system will be of particular interest to role players, each paragraph sequence will be usable as the outline for an adventure in *Universe*, SPI's new science fiction role-playing game. *Star Trader* will be a completely independent game in its own right, but it is consistent with *Universe* and uses that game's rationale, technology, and history as a backdrop.

Nick Karp

THE RETURN OF THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT

BY HARRY HARRISON



ILLUSTRATION BY TIMOTHY TRUMAN

"You are the only one who can save us, diGriz! Say that you will do it, I beg of you!"

The words were music to my ears. I try to be humble in my own simple way, but it is very hard. People keep telling me how great I am. They know that I have saved the universe — twice at least — as they feel, rightly enough, I suppose, that I can do anything.

"Please help Four men have died already, that is why we need you."

His words dropped me from the heights of stardom into the abyss of despair. I snatched at him.

"So that's what you need me for. To be corpse number five. You think I'll look good in a coffin?"

There it was, of course. You get a reputation and you have to live up to it — even if you die in the attempt. I rose from my chair and paced the length of the room, trying to ignore the doglegs set grouped uneasily against the wall. Why should I listen to them? Why me, James Bolivar diGriz, the Sunless Steel Rot? Outcast of society — yet still a hero of society? A lifetime criminal who was now being called upon for help by the very people I preyed upon. It wasn't fair.

"Not fair?" I cried. "It should be robbing you blind, not doing you favors." They nodded eagerly at this.

"Rob us, Jim, rob us! We don't mind. Only finish this little job first!"

I sighed deeply. There is no escaping one's destiny. "Before I decide, would someone mind telling me just what this hell this is all about?"

All they needed was the starting whistle. In an instant they had a hologram projector up and running. A halo of a satellite ston spring into existence before me, soft music played and a deep voice began speaking.

"This is the orbiting satellite, Stanyan VI. It is the port of call of all the deep spaces approaching the Stanyan System." The spidery form of a speaker drifted up to the image and nodded to drive home the point. "Cargo is then transhipped to the thirteen planets that comprise this solar system. The operation is successful, safe and speedy." "Visions swelled up in the backgrounds and playing successful, safe and speedy music. I began to doze off — but a crash of brass and tympany woke me up.

"But everything has changed!" the snarloner gasped. "It all began when this passenger shuttle went out of control..."

THE FAMILIAR EGG-SHAPED FORM of a shuttle swam into view, drifting towards one of the satellite's docking bays. It was completely under computer control; accidents were an impossibility, the rerouting jets would fire and ease it into place. Then the impossibility happened. Instead of the breaking jet being scowled, the stern jets fired full on — sending it hurtling its reward. It was over in an instant. The shuttle crashed into the solid steel of the docking port and burst open like a silver egg hurled against a wall. Air pulsed out and froze instantly. Maimed bodies were hurled free — but unhappily did not freeze as fast as the air had done. I could not take my eyes away from this gruesome scene as the names for continued in a hushed voice.

"Thirty-seven people were killed in this accident. Which proved to be its accords at all. When the mechanic went to examine the malfunctioning navigational computer, he found that a ten thousand volt current had been shunted through the metal doors of the computer room..."

The halo of the space station pulsed out its existence and was replaced by a lifeless image of the mechanic who had read the handle on the hatched door. I turned away.

"I've seen a lined corpse before, thank you," I said. "Can I have the rest of this nasty story straight without the sensational visual effects?"

The scene shifted back to the satellite again and the voice continued remorselessly.

"It soon became obvious that the navigational computer was not at fault. It had been overridden by the Central Control computer. This is the Galaxy grade, Mark 2500 model, absolutely reliable and never known to malfunction before..."

"There's a first time for everything," I shouted, trying to be heard over the booming voice and backup orchestra. "Will someone kindly switch off this ghastly howl? Enough is enough."

The music died with a gasping reitrite and the halo popped out of existence; the lights came back up. I turned and stabbed a finger at the covering doglegs.

"Now just bring me up to date without the special effects. You have a nutty computer that has already polished off a lot of people. And it is a Mark 2500 which probably handles hundreds of flights a day, controls thousands of operations, along with hundreds of thousands of subfunctions as well — that must be one smart computer. If it has gone gaga it won't really like anyone coming near it. The four men who were killed — they tried to turn the thing off?"

The delegates all nodded together gloomily. I nodded as well. "I thought so. Have you evacuated the satellite?" At this they shook their heads even more gloomily. The leader of the delegation spoke.

"It won't let us. The Mark 2500. All of the ports are sealed and we can't get near the satellite. And there are over three hundred passengers trapped inside. You must save them, diGriz! Their lives are in your hands..."

"Not yet they're not! They are still in your hands which is why you are here — and why you are wailing so. You're all sweating — and I think I know why. The delegation represents the corporation that owns the satellite!" Reluctant nods. "And you also represent the insurance company that insures the satellite?" Heads nodding like crazy now. "So not only do you have a humanitarian interest in those poor souls trapped inside your hunk of space ironmongery — but you have a financial interest as well." Chink dropped to chests and a wave of financial despair sighed through the room. I smiled and shook my clenched fists over my head.

"Despair not gentlemen — diGriz will save you! I will turn off your kooky computer and save your prisoners!"

I waited until the cheers and shouts of joy had died down before I put the boot in.

"But, like you, I am a businessman as well as a humanitarian. My reasonable and very low fee for the job will be the miserly sum of two million credits..."

I turned away and let a dagger while their moans of pain and ones of anguish echoed from the chamber walls. Then I pulled out a expensive smoke and eased my hand for silence.

"For ohame," I chided. "You'll get that sum back within a few days of operation." My voice grew cold. "But if you don't get back into a position and if the relatives of the people you have allowed to be destroyed by that mad machine decide to sue you..."

Temporary interruption by wails of despair. "...why, you will have to pay out billions. You have sixty seconds to decide. The fee will be payable in six million in signing and one million upon delivery of the main fuse from the crackpot computer. Fifty-five seconds."

"How will you do it?" someone called out.

"I'll call you as soon as you have paid. A computer with sick circuitry is as nothing to the man who saved the universe. Twice." Which meant that I had no idea how I was going to do it, but that was my business and not theirs. Just as their business was earning money and mine stealing it. "Thirty-one seconds."

"It's robbery — but we agree. We have no choices."

NOW OR NEVER. Which was why I had made the fee so large. As soon as the money had been credited to my account, I threw them all out and spread out the technical reports. This was not going to be easy. I forced away the nagging realization that it was not only hard but completely impossible. Never say die! The Rot marches on. There had to be a way.

Except that three weeks later, in a shuttle floating in orbit about the insane satellite, I still hadn't found it. Nor was the captain of the shuttle any help.

"You're number five," he said, in an exceedingly gloomy voice. "You'll never make it either. Croaked as I crunched like the other four. That cocksme computer will let you aboard all right. Like a fly into a web. Then..."

"Then it is my worry. And I can do without your pep talk. I'm sure up now and I want to be launched as soon as this nebular machine of yours comes up with the orbital calculations that I asked for."

"Suicide..." was the last word I heard as I tested that bit of helmet of my modified suit. My mind in that all of the metal parts had been sprayed with insulating foam. The Mark 2500 was very free with its short circuits and two of my predecessors had been electrocuted. I had no desire to be tried for my efforts — even before I was inside the renegade satellite.

My plan for getting aboard the thing was simple enough, although a real I was sitting alone on the nosecone of the shuttle. I began to have doubts about it. Because to make the plan work I had to trust the computer aboard the shuttle. And I was not very happy about computers at this moment. I felt

the ship orbit behind me, then the steady pressure on my back as it accelerated. This lasted a few seconds — then ended on the braking jets close beside me pulled out clouds of gas. The shuttle decelerated. I didn't. The spaceship fell behind me as I continued on in what I hoped was the correct orbit. Aiming for the spot in space where the satellite would be. Optimistically launched not only in this direction of Stanyan VI, but also moving outward in a course that would bring me down right on top of an emergency exit I hoped.

But it worked. Despair my fears I watched the satellite get closer and closer until it filled the entire sky. I knew the thing had no missiles or guns — but it could use its deceleration fields to launch something heavy in my direction. That's how one of my predecessors had bought it. But I was coming in on the side away from the landing bays. I hoped.

The seconds ticked by and I had my thumb palmed over the button on my braking jets. The computer beep in the shuttle was supposed to give me the signal to brake — but as I said I was not trusting computers very much these days. Closer and closer, larger and larger the metal wall grew. And I knew I would splatter myself all over it in a few seconds more. What was the signal? The computer had blown a fuse. I was good or dead! Yet if I braked too soon I would miss the station completely and float out into space I couldn't wait any longer. . .

"Fire now," the emotionless voice of the computer said. It did not have to repeat itself. My thumb clamped down, clouds of gas billowed out and around me. I couldn't see a thing! The firing ended and the gas cleared — and there was the side of the satellite just ahead of me.

I hit, tumbled, bounced away again — and grabbed an antenna mast just before I vanished back into interstellar space. After that I just held on for awhile, waiting for the air scrubber to evaporate the perspiration from my forehead — and from the mirrored up helmet in front of my eyes as well.

"You know, Jim," I said, ignoring the quiver in my voice, "you're getting a little old for this kind of romp. Time to retire, some quip little planet, rob a bank or two when you get bored. Leave this interstellar suicide to the kids."

But, even so I muttered to myself, I was hard at work. It's okay to bitch as long as you are doing something constructive at the same time. I hauled myself down from the pole and kicked off in a nest that ended over the emergency exit. Which was labeled,

by some moronic civil servant no doubt, EMERGENCY EXIT. Fine for me, but of little use to anyone on the inside trying to find their way out. There was a large handle in the center of the door labeled PULL. I did. It swung open noisily and I drifted into the airlock beyond. Entrance effected, troubles over.

Others might think that — but not me. I'm not called the Stainless Steel Rat for nothing. No air. I know how to get through stainless steel walls and come out on the other side alive. Just ahead of me was an inviting, shining metal lever. Pull! That once, the outer door would close, air would rush into the lock, and when the pressure was equalized the inner door would open automatically. Very simple. And very suspicious. Floating in the center of the airlock, touching nothing, I opened the rooflog on my hip and took out a multimeter. I jammed one prod into the handle — then touched the other to the wall close by.

There was a colorful display of sparks and the readout displayed 25,000 volts. Very interesting. Mark 2500 was expecting me.

I PUT AWAY THE METER and extracted a thick pad of insulation. Electricity in this quantity should be treated with respect. I wrapped this pad around the handle and tugged. The door slowly opened. I waited until it gaped wide before triggering a blast on my suit rockets. A strong one. Because as soon as I was past the door I would be in the grip of the satellite's gravity field.

This shot me forward — and I began to drop as I came into the ship. But I hit the deck well away from the entrance and did a shoulder roll, coming up on my feet, fists clenched, ready for anything.

"Are you the new troubleshooter?" a voice said, I spun about to face a gloomy looking man dressed in a soiled boilersuit.

"No," I said, smiling warmly. "I am Senra and I'm here just in time for Christmas."

He just grunted at that, a serious type, his expression one of darkest gloom. He pointed over his shoulder with his thumb. "They're waiting for you in the rectal. Get a message you were coming. This way." His turned end, almost as an afterthought, called back to me. "My name's Corona. Tech fifth class."

"My pleasure," I said, but if he heard me he gave no answer. I was really beginning to feel welcome. I peeled off the spacesuit and trotted after him.

Things were much better in the rec hall. There were about a dozen people waiting there and they burst out clogging when I entered.

"You're welcome indeed," I said inclining my head up in a courtly manner. "As you have heard, I am here to save you." My voice hardened. "I would also like to know how you heard I was coming — since the kooky computer controls all of the radio circuits in this satellite."

A handsome woman with gorgeous red hair held up a portable radio. "With this," she said. "It was put in the front of a viewport we can receive signals from the rescue ships out there. We just can't answer."

"You can now I have a souped-up transceiver with me. Might I ask your name?"

"Trina. Deputy Commander of the station."

"And where may I ask to the Commander?"

She looked at me and her nostrils widened. "Didn't you do your homework? He was in the shuttle that crashed and started this whole mess."

"I know only what I am told." My nostrils flared to match hers. "Now would you mind introducing me to whoever is in charge now?"

"An emergency committee of three. Myself, Dr. Putz here, and Commander Stark. Dr. Putz is Assistant Science Officer, while Commander Stark is Second in Command of security on the satellite."

"Assistant, Second in Command," I muffed. "I don't usually deal with the hired help. Where are their bosses?"

"Our superiors were killed in the same crash of the shuttle," Commander Stark growled. "What you see is what you get, dig?"

"There is no time for party squabbles," I told them. "I am here to save you. So you will give me all this help I need. Is that correct...?"

The emergency committee drew to one side and muttered to each other. They reached agreement quickly enough and Trina spoke for them all. "Agreed. You will pass your instructions through Technician Corona."

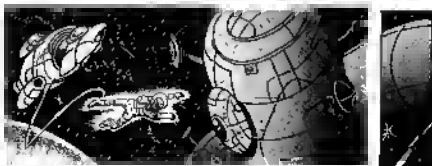
Corona's grunt hopefully indicated agreement. I nodded sagely. "A wise decision. The first thing I will need is a deck plan of this satellite."

"That's what they always ask for first," Corona said gloomily. He passed over a thick and dog-eared volume of plans. It was burned a bit at the edges and splattered with something that might have been blood. I had a dark suspicion. "Been used before?" I asked.

He nodded. "Four times. There was little humor in his smile. "Maybe five will be lucky."

"Thanks." I flipped through the pages. "You don't happen to remember how the other operations in the computer were made, do you?"

"Sure do." He took the volume from me and flipped through it. He had a good, if morbid, memory and quickly indicated the various routes my predecessors had taken. Through the atropo jets or radio room,



power central, food supplies, oxygen scrubbing, every way possible. Good intelligent plans — and all of them had failed.

"Any idea how you are going to go?" he asked, handing the phone back. I had none — but I wasn't going to admit this to this hired help.

"I have an idea, but I must perfect it. First some more information. See if you can pry the good Dr. Putz away from that five liter glass of beer and ask him he would be so kind as to join me for a moment."

"You wanted to see me?" Putz asked, wiping foam from his moustache with the back of his hand.

"If you would be so kind. As Assistant Science Officer you should know a thing or two about this Mark 2500 computer — shouldn't you?"

"Of course. In theory that is. I had nothing to do with this day to day operation."

"Even better. Would you then be kind enough to explain to me how a computer, which is nothing but a great big adding machine, could possibly go insane?"

"A good question," he said, pawing his jaw in deep concentration. "I have given that much thought and come up with a possible answer. This Mark 2500 series has a memory capacity in excess of ten to the fourteenth power. That is rather big. As I am sure you know, the human brain has a memory capacity of ten to the twelfth..."

"Which means the computer is far smarter than a human being?"

"Not in this slightest. I said memory, not intelligence. A computer is just a complex machine programmed for certain functions. But with that capacity for memory it is certainly capable of intelligence. Perhaps some internet shortcircuiting took place. This is just speculation, mind you. If the same accident that saw intelligent rise in animals billions of years ago, if that accident occurred in machine brain..."

"I follow your point. There is the possibility that it could grow, learn, develop a personality. A machine mind without morals, love or hate. Coldly efficient..."

"This is just speculation, mind you!"

"I realize that, Dr. Putz, and appreciate the help. But it is almost academic to me. I think it is more important to know just what this machine can do, not why it is doing it."

"It can do anything it wants aboard this satellite. It controls every function, every operation. If it wanted it could shut off our air, poison our food, destroy us in a hundred different ways."

"But it hasn't?"

"No. And that is most interesting. It has averted the major airlocks and will allow no one in or out. It has cut off our radio communication. But other than that it has made no attempt to harm us. Though, of course, it has deflected itself by killing those who were sent against it."

"Aren't you forgetting the landing shuttle that it wiped out?"

"I meant since that time. There was, perhaps, a good reason for destroying the shuttle. It looked around nervously. I leaned close and lowered my voice

"You wouldn't care to expand on that point, would you, doctor?"

"Again, just a theory. The three senior officers in command of this satellite were on their shuttle. If the computer wished to take charge that would certainly be a good way to start."

"It would indeed," I said, my brain whirling with thoughts. Pieces were beginning to fall into place. "Now, if you don't mind, Dr. Putz, I am a little tired after my adventurous journey here. I intend to lie down and study these plans and will confer with you all in eight hours time. Will you please convey that message to your associates? Thank you."

I spun on my heel and exited. Corons was waiting by the door.



"We'll meet here in eight hours. I'll have a plan by then and I'll let you know what I need. All right?"

"You're the boss," he said, shrugging off, then calling back over his shoulder. "Plenty of empty transit passenger cabins on M deck if you want to shut your eyes while you are making your plans."

"Just what I had in mind." I picked up my spacesuit and the rest of my equipment and headed for the elevators. I punched for M deck, exited there — and went straight to the emergency stairs.

"Well done, Jim," I congratulated myself, since no one else was there to do this job. Nor did I want anyone there at this moment. "As Dr. Putz said, this computer is a smarty. It must be eavesdropping on everything said in the public room."

It might also be eavesdropping on me in the stairwell I realized. And that up. It should have a hard job listening to my thoughts. Corons had revealed that all of the previous strappings on the computer had been known by him. So they must have been discussed, planned in public. And been overheard. Well, that wasn't going to happen to Slippery Jim McGinn, not for nothing named Slippery! I had slipped away, the computer would not be expecting an assault yet. By the time it works up to what was happening I would have put it to sleep forever. But how?

I sat down on the metal stairs and slipped through the deck plans. The manual computer was located, as you might very well imagine, in the center of the satellite. Which was ideal for the computer, but not so good for anyone trying to sneak up on it. I

tropped the various courses the other hopefuls had taken. All very imaginative. And attending in the same way. And all complex. There had to be simple and quick way to get near the thing. But there wasn't. Instead of all the doors, hatches, ladders and entrances, I wanted to get directly to it. Bore a hole straight down with a super laser? Good idea. Only I didn't have a super laser. I started to throw the plans aside — then pulled them back when something caught my eye. Of course! The hole was already there!

Drilled right through the satellite. From top to bottom. Passing right by the computer room. I permitted myself a chuckle of admiration and pleasure. You're a bright boy, Jim! I traced this opening with my finger.

The elevator shaft.

Nor would I make any attempt to reach the computer by elevator. That would be suicide. It was the stiletto that I wanted. The magnetized boots on my spacesuit would get me there. To think it to be fast and smooth, that's the Stainless Steel Rat's motto.

I pulled on this spacesuit, checked my equipment, then went down the stairs to the lowest deck. The deck plans came in handy then because this was a machinery level. I slipped between the humming generators and clothing machines, working my way towards the bottom of elevator shaft 19. It was there, right where it was indicated on the diagram, with a number pointed directly over the inspection hatch. All going exceedingly well.

I unlatched the hatch and lowered it gently to the deck, then poked my head through. Darkness. My light flashed up the shaft and I was aware of the bottom of the elevator for above. The way was clear to computer central. I did not stand around pondering the dangers, but went instantly into action — climbing inside and losing my boot and pressing it against the wall where it hung on the reel with magnetic cohesion. The gravity here was oriented towards the base of the shaft which made it difficult. But not impossible. I hung head downwards from the boots, uncomfortable but necessary. I switched off the current in the bottom boot and shifted it above the other. Current on, magnetized, stuck there. Then the other boot, repeating this process over and over.

And slowly, one clumsy step at a time I rose up the shaft.

It was hard work and tiring work. I was perhaps halfway there and panting loudly when I had to rest — hanging from the boots, gasping for air — when I heard it. A humming sound. What did it mean? With sudden and horrified realization I pointed my light upwards.

The computer had decreed my presence in this shaft.

It was sending the elevator down to crush me!

I permitted myself one instant of panic, to promote the flow of adrenaline, then clomped down hard with my mental control. No panic, Jim! You've been in tight spots before. Think — don't react blindly.

I wouldn't retreat and reach the bottom

of the shaft in time. I would be crushed if I tried. Could I force open one of the doors and get out at a different level? An unknown, I had no time to make experiments. So I couldn't go down, or out the air — there was only one direction left. Up! I would have to tackle the elevator itself!

Which was easier said than done. Everything depended upon perfect timing rather than on speed. No panic, Jim. You know what must be done. My mind was calm as I leaned back and coolly examined the bottom of the dropping elevator. Closer now. Pever off on my left boot, that's it. Hang backwards from the other boot and raise the left one over my head. The elevator dropped, appearing to go faster and faster. Right on top of me...

It was bang, crunch — and it almost killed me. As the metal bottom of the elevator hit my upraised boot I magnitized it and turned off the other one. My knee buckled at the impact and I slammed against the bottom of the elevator — then dropped back to hang, dazed, from the single boot.

There was no time for this kind of suicidal behavior. Despite my muddled head I raised by other boot; it clamped tight. Then bent at the waist, my hand with the thermal lance outstretched. The intensely hot flame roared out, slicing through the steel floor like butter. I moved it in a quick circle, trying to forget the bottom of the shaft that was rushing towards me.

THERE WAS A CREAK OF METAL and I pulled aside just as the circle of metal flooring dropped free and fell. Now! I let go of the thermal lance, ignoring the bath it gave me in the face as it swung from its safety line about my wrist. Reaching up and seizing the metal edge of the hole in my gloves. Switching off my boots at the same instant.

For an endless moment I dangled in the air. Then, with a single spasmodic contraction of my muscles, I hauled myself up and into the elevator.

Just as it hit the bottom of the shaft, I sat there for a few moments after that. Breathing deeply — and enjoying the fact that I was still breathing. Looking down at the buffers and the floor of the shaft just below the opening in the floor, I would have been squashed like a beetle in another second. That didn't bear thinking about.

"On your feet, James!" ordered "Ne rusty collection of silicon chips is going to out-think you. Act! Now! While the thing is still off its gusset. You're but moments away from victory!"

I acted. Pressing the button that sent the elevator back up the shaft. Would it work? It did. The computer was not in command for the moment, I tore open the door of the control panel and counted the floors as we rose. Just a few more... there!

A blast from the thermal lance fused the controls and the elevator shuddered to a stop. Even as it did that I was pushing open the hatch in the roof and climbing out. The door to the computer room was just before me!

I did not waste time with delicacies. I simply burned all the door hangers and kicked the thing down. And dived behind it into

the room, the lance still flaming, ready for anything.

It was anticlimax. The room-sized computer just chuckled to itself. Some memory discs whirled, lights flashed on and off in interesting patterns. It appeared to be completely unaware of my presence, frightened up and turned off the flame.

IHAD PENETRATED TO THE CENTER of its brain. If had the receptors here. Perhaps I was still wary. I walked forward cautiously, then stopped when I saw the small metal box of circuitry in the center of the floor. A single red light glowed on its top. A large cable emerged from its side and squirmed across the floor to vanish into the computer. I leaned forward cautiously and unplugged the cable. The red light went out. I fired the box and bounced it in my hand.

"If I thought it might be something like this," I said aloud. "End of the insane computer." I walked to the control console and pushed down on the access key.

"Yes?" the calm, mechanical voice of the Mark 2500 said.

"You have sealed all of the airlocks?"

"Yes. I was issued overriding instructions."

"Cease this operation at once. And cancel any other abnormal instructions. Understand?"

"This operation is already completed. Normal operation resumed."

"Very good." I climbed out of my spacesuit. "Send out an announcement for all personnel aboard the satellite to assemble in the recreation room."

I took the little metal box, but left all of my equipment, except for my pistol, then started towards the hall with the announcement booming in my ears from every loudspeaker I passed. The technician, Corona, was waiting outside the hall when I came up, his eyebrows lifted inquisitively.

"Are they inside?" I asked. He nodded. "Good," I said, handing him my pistol. "As far as I know this is the only weapon aboard the satellite. Stop by the door and cover me. I may need help. Do you know how to use this thing?"

"You bet! You can count on me."

"Good," I said, entering the hall, my flank protected. I faced the murmuring crowd that was jammed in there and raised my hands for silence. "It's all over," I told them. "The danger is at an end."

"You've disconnected the insane computer!" Trina asked, awestruck.

"No," I responded sweetly, "I just disconnected it." I held up the metal box for them all to see. "Computers can't go crazy because they are not sane to begin with. They are not human. But they can be programmed to appear insane — which is what happened here. With this."

THEN WAS A UNIVERSAL GASP, and Trina spoke the thought that possessed them all. "Programmed? Someone caused all this? But why?"

"Why not you?" I asked sweetly. "Your boss died in the crash of the shuttle. Perhaps

you caused the crash in order to get his job. I looked at your personal record. You're very ambitious."

"I'm also mechanically literate!" she snapped back. "Didn't you see that in my record? I'm an administrator, not an electrician. I couldn't possibly have designed or built that thing."

"True, true," I murmured, then spun on my heel and held the control box in front of Commander Stark's face. "But the commander here is not an electrician dummy. His boss also died in the crash. You did it, Stark, to get his job!"

"Are you out of your teeny-weeny?" Stark sneered. "If you had looked at my file you would have seen that I volunteered for early retirement. I should have been home by now. The last thing I want is a better position. I just want out."

"Then we have the killer!" I shouted, pointing to the crowing Dr. Putz. "The assistant sciences officer, so jealous of his superior that he killed him. Then tried to palm me off with a dumb story about how a computer could go mad. He, a scientist, should have known better than to try and sell me that bill of goods. But he knew that someone had programmed the computer to appear to be mad. Himself!"

"You accuse me!" Putz screamed, "I know nothing about machines or computers! I am a geologist! Sent here as an emergency replacement. All I know is how to hit rocks with airda hammers."

"Then," I said, jaw dropping more than a little, "if none of you did it — who did? Who had the technical knowledge for this job? Who knew the plans of the other rescuers, knew their every move so that he could thwart them?"

I turned about as I said this — and looked into the muzzle of my own gun.

"That's right, you fool!" Corona sneered, the light of madness now visible in those piglike eyes. "I did it! Me, the one they laughed at, gave orders to! Well they aren't laughing or giving orders any more. I showed them..."

"Give me that gun," I said, stepping forward as the others quailed back.

"Take it!" he screamed. And pulled the trigger.

THEN LOOKED DOWN AT THE GUN, pulling the trigger over and over again when nothing happened. My first caught him hard on the jaw and he slumped to the deck, unconscious. I bent and picked up the gun — and smiled.

"Unloaded," I told the gaping audience. "I was sure I am the very beginning that someone had programmed the computer to do all this dirty work. And whoever did that programming had to be aboard the satellite. Therefore, since you were all under suspicion, I could take na one into my confidence. Hence the accusations — and the unloaded gun. Corona seemed the obvious suspect, but I just wanted him to prove it himself."

A ragged cheer began, rising quickly in volume. I smiled and bowed graciously. Accepting as well the impassioned hoses of the ramshorn redhead Trina. All this and two million credits too! ■■

Science

for Science Fiction

by John Boardman, Ph. D.

Perennial Corn?

Maize, called by America's first European settlers "Indian corn," and now simply "corn," is America's biggest grain crop. It is extremely efficient at converting solar energy into food, as the Indians knew long before the Europeans landed. They had developed so many different domestic varieties that it was only recently that the wild ancestor was definitely identified, the Mexican grain *Zea diploperennis*.

There is, however, one major difference between *Zea* and domestic corn. *Zea* is a perennial, and yields a crop a year. Corn is an annual, after the stalk has produced its ears in this fall, it dies. Corn has to be planted afresh every spring. Nowadays farmers cannot even save any corn for seed, since almost all farmers plant hybrid varieties that do not breed true. New seed corn must be purchased each spring from the breeders of the hybrids.

There is a possibility, however, that a perennial corn can be developed. This, if feasible, would work a profound change upon American agriculture, which now plants 70 million acres in corn each year, for a total crop of nearly 7 billion bushels. If domestic corn can be crossed with *Zea* to produce a plant that is a perennial like *Zea* but yields as much as corn, then great amounts of time, money, and fuel can be saved. The fuel alone, which is used in plowing and sowing corn, amounts to 1.25 gallons per acre per year.

Since *Zea* is a plant of the tropics, there is a suspicion that it or a corn-*Zea* hybrid might not adapt so well to the icy winters of the upper Midwest. If so, then the hybrid might be more useful in the tropics, large areas of which have not yet been brought under cultivation so efficiently. But *Zea* seems to do well in the cold Mexican uplands.

Considering the world's need for both food and fuel, plant geneticists have been handed a real challenge.

New Scientist, 5 January 1981

Solar System Maps

We have recently discovered that it is possible to acquire rather attractive maps of the moon and planets from the US Geological Survey. You can request a catalog of lunar and planetary maps from them (see address below), we provide a brief description of a few maps, their order numbers, and the price here. Orders must be accompanied by check or money order payable to US Geological Survey in US funds; a surcharge of 1.25% is added for orders outside the US, Canada, and Mexico.

I-1063 Geologic Map of Mars: A very attractive four-color map of Mars divided into geological provinces. Scale: 1:25 million, 36" x 48" \$150.

I-1703 Geologic Map of the Near Side of the Moon: Also four-color, Scale: 1:5 million, accompanied by 7-page text \$150.

I-1324 Altimetric and Shaded Relief Map of Venus: A remarkable four-color map, this radar altimetry composite map was recently put together from Pioneer-Venus radar backscatter measurements. It's the first close look at the Venereal surface. \$2.

I-961 Topographic Map of Mars: Drabber than I-1063 above, this shows topography and albedo markings rather than geologic provinces. 36" x 42" \$150.

I-903 Rainscape Mosaic of Mercury: Composite photograph of the third of Mercury's surface photographed in date. Scale: 1:10 million, 23" x 26", \$125.

I-1171 Mercury: Relief and Albedo Markings Visible on Mariner 10 Images: A map of the part of the Mercurian surface which we have observed, with its various craters and terrain features named and labelled. \$2.

I-1239, I-1240, I-1241, I-1242 Preliminary Pictorial Map of Callisto, Preliminary Pictorial Map of Io, Preliminary Pictorial Map of Europa, Pictorial Preliminary Map of Ganymede: These are maps of the listed areas of the Jovian moons which were photographed by Voyagers 1 and 2. The differences among the four are quite remarkable. The few named features are labelled. Scale is 1:25 million. \$1.75 each. (Black and white.)

East of the Mississippi, write:

US Geological Survey
Branch of Distribution/Eastern Region
1200 South Eads St.
Arlington, VA, 22202

West of the Mississippi, write:

US Geological Survey
Branch of Distribution/Central Region
85 x 25296, Federal Center
Denver, CO, 80225

Note: SPI does not carry planetary maps. Please do not write us with any requests.

Greg Costikyan

The Great Explosion?

As astronomers are convinced that the greatest explosive event that can occur presently is a supernova. As the final stage in the life of a large star, in a few days the star can be completely ripped apart and its matter and energy strewn out into the universe in a stanic explosion. A typical supernova, during the explosion, puts out as much energy as the other 100 billion stars in the galaxy together.

It would be difficult to imagine a greater explosion than this, except for the "Big Bang" from which the universe originated some 15 to 20 billion years ago. However, there is some indirect evidence indicating that on very rare occasions an explosion can take place that releases even more energy than a supernova.

This evidence began to accumulate over a hundred years ago, when the American astronomer Benjamin A. Gould (1824-1896) pointed out that there is an interesting array of bright young stars in this part of the galaxy. This group, called "Gould's belt," in-

cludes most of the bright stars that we see in the night sky. They are mostly hot, bright, blue-white giant stars which are using up their fuel much faster than our sun does and can therefore be expected to have shorter lifetimes.

Gould's belt consists of a system of stars with a diameter of 4200 light years and a thickness of 1800 light years, whose center is about 300 light years away in the direction of the southern constellation Puppis. If the Solar System is within Gould's belt, but is not a part of it, being very much older than the equatorial plane of this flattened disc of stars makes an angle of about 20° with the plane of the galaxy. The youngest stars in this aggregation seem to be closest to its center, the oldest stars in Gould's belt are about 60 million years old. The belt is expanding at a rate of about 10 kilometers per second.

Not only is the sun near the center of Gould's belt, but it is also near the center of a slowly expanding ring of hydrogen gas which was discovered in 1972 by the Canadian astrophysicists V.A. Hughes and D. Rindless. This belt of gas is an ellipse whose center is about 900 light years away, and whose longest diameter is about 4200 light years. It is expanding at the rate of 6 kilometers per second. Interstellar dust seems to be distributed in a comparable pattern.

If the current expansion of these systems of stars, gas, and dust are traced back, it appears that they began, not far from the sun, about 66 million years ago. If this expansion is the result of an ancient explosion, it would have sent great shock waves through interstellar matter. Such shock waves would concentrate this matter in some places, and the greater gravitational attraction of these concentrations would pull in yet more matter. Eventually new stars would be born — the stars of Gould's belt.

Nothing else is known in our galaxy comparable to Gould's belt. However, such rings of expanding matter are found in other galaxies. Around their rims are supernova remnants, suggesting that these explosions might have been triggered by the much greater explosion that cleared the ring of expanding matter.

While astronomers are investigating the remnants of a catastrophic explosion that happened about 66 million years ago, paleontologists have been looking for just such a catastrophe. It was about 66 million years ago that a great and sudden change took place in the earth's flora and fauna. Entire orders of animals, from microscopic forms of ocean life up to the dinosaurs, were wiped out in, by geological standards, a very short time. The evidence suggests a sudden lowering of earth's temperature, but too short a period of time to bring on an ice age. A short spate of heavy radiation from a nearby astronomical catastrophe could have brought this about. Land plants could have survived seed. Insects and creatures which eat them would survive because insects can survive anything. Birds could fly over large distances for such food as might be available. But the dinosaurs and placiosaurs at the top of the food chain would have been doomed.

Monsters in the Sky, Paolo Maffei, 1976

Facts for Fantasy

by Susan Schwartz, Ph.D.

Charlemagne's Daughters

Though Charlemagne sent his sons away from the palace in order to train them for independent action as royal administrators, he kept his daughters close by his side. He refused to allow them to marry, but tolerated their love affairs and illegitimate children rather than lose their companionship. Whenever he sat down to eat in any of his palaces, he never took a meal without them. Historians of Charlemagne's court record that at such dinners, Charlemagne's three favorite daughters — Bertrude, Rotrud, and Gisla — were characteristically present. Only afterward does he mention Liurgard, the queen, and his other daughters.

While his boys were brought up austere, too valuable to be treated like toys, the daughters were encouraged to dress as elaborately as they liked. Theodrada, another daughter, is described as wearing precious stones in her feet, hands, seems in her dress, her ramples, and her breasts. Nor was this splendor for some major court ceremony, for Theodrada displayed her jewelry at all times.

The Carolingian Hunt, by Heinrich Heilmann, Harper Torchbooks, 1984.

Romans of the New World

This was the name that the historian Francis Parkman gave to the Iroquois Indians. His group of Indians in the American Northeast affected the developing colonies of Europeans more. With Dutch and English-made firearms that the Iroquois acquired in the 17th Century, an alliance of five Iroquois tribes went east into the maritime provinces of Canada and west as far as the Illinois River. They crushed many of their traditional Algonkian-speaking enemies and took under subjection even some Iroquois-speakers who did not belong to their league. Since the Algonkians allied with the French in Canada, the Iroquois allied with the English. They fought on both sides during the War of Independence.

How did they accomplish so much, and why were these Iroquois who had such a profound effect on this country? Originally, they may have come from Cherokee country in Georgia and the Carolinas, or down from the north. In actuality, however, they developed just where the first colonists met them — primarily in upstate New York.

The Iroquois stressed community. In their own villages stood longhouses which could be 25 feet wide and 50 to 100 feet long. These frameworks of saplings, covered with sheets of bark, were subdivided into apartments that were occupied by closely related families. Running down the center of such longhouses were shared fireplaces. Each of the five tribes (who were joined by the Tusca-

ronas, or "younger brothers") and semi-clients controlled two or more such villages. The village affairs were supervised by a local council. Above this council was a tribal council which met in the largest villages. These tribes were banded together in the "Great League of Peace," the confederacy which was governed by a council of fifty sachems who represented all the tribes. Tuscarora men were elected by the clan mothers, who could not themselves sit on the council but who could recall representatives they considered unsuitable.

In central position and keepers of the league's fire, as their name implied, were the Onondagas. The four principal tribes in the League were the Cayugas, the Oneidas, the Senecas, and the Mohawks. At the beginning of the 18th Century, Iroquois territory extended from southern Ontario to Tennessee.

It is said that their League, with their sacred sachema, had an effect on the American Articles of Confederation and the subsequent Constitution. It is certain the Iroquois had a profound respect for General — later President — Washington, of whom they created the myth that their gods established one particular paradise just for Washington alone.

Legacy of the Iroquois, Francis Parkman; "The Iroquois Confederacy," New World Archaeology, James A. York, W. H. Freeman and Co., 1974.

Fire Worship

Before the ancient Iranians considered fire a symbol of the supreme god, it was worshipped for its own sake. The fire-altar was probably one of the first Indo-European people participated. Some of its participants — called Mazdeists — were called asherpes, or fire-worshippers. A tale once accorded a few of the princes of Persia was *Wizakara* or fire-maker. Among the magi, or wizards, the *herbedh* or fire-chiefs were eminent. Two fire altars survive until this day, while many *arash-gah* or places of fire, are preserved in many places.

No matter how highly developed pre-Muslim Iranian religion became, it retained a basic allegiance to fire, with the result that all Iranian rituals stress the glorification of light and how pure it is.

One expression of this belief takes the form of the myth of Atar (Ira) within Brahmanism. While Atar is represented as the sun or Ahura Mazda, supreme god of the Iranians, we can suspect that this "son" predeceives the father in mythic belief. Also, he is more than words of flame. As a personification, he brings mankind comfort and the way to live, in addition to wisdom, fertility and a paradise reserved for those who are virtuous. He defends the world against the principles of the Evil One. For Atar, the unforgivable sin is to cook dead flesh, which insults the Life Principle.

Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology

See-Sickness

Among many African tribes the king was also the high priest, with many rituals binding his life. For example, among the Ewe-speaking people of the slave coasts, the

king was held to be unapproachable by his subjects. He was allowed out of his dwelling to bathe or to do other things only at night. This sole people who might speak with him were three elders and his personal representative, the "umbrella king," but even they had to sit on a shield with their backs turned to him. He could not see horses or Europeans, and he was strictly forbidden to look upon the sea.

This prohibition is widespread. The king of Dahomey may not look out at the sea, nor may the Guinean kings of Loango and Great Ardia. To the northwest of Dahomey, Ewe priests threaten the people and the king with death if they ever see him. In Senegal, the people of Cayor believe that if their king looks upon the sea, he will die within a year. He may not even cross a river, the chiefs of Mahoraland, particularly among the Runkwa and the Nyadin also suffer this restriction. When one chieftain to cross the river, he was blindfolded and carried across as his people shouted and sang. Had he merely walked across, he would have — they said — been blindfolded and died. Certainly, he would have lost his power. In Madagascar is said, the kings may not cross rivers or sail.

The Golden Bough, Sir J. G. Frazer, MacMillan, 1909.

Siva

The Indian god Siva is the head of a strict ascetic religion. He is called an Isvara, a Lord and Master. While he wears the cord of the high Brahman caste, Siva is also the patron of people without status — vampires and demons. He is also in charge of alchemy who have repudiated all the classes of the world. The Jains called Siva *divagambara*, or "clothed with space." Though he is described as naked, sometimes he wears a necklace of skulls.

Hindu art gives Siva for Shiva many different aspects. When it anthropomorphizes him, he appears with four arms. The two upper arms hold a drum and a doe, the two lower ones give and measure. His forehead is sometimes marked with three strokes, and a third eye lies in its center. His hair is sometimes tangled and sometimes knotted into the ascetic's hairiness, and is decorated with a crescent moon and a peacock. He rides on the bull Nandi.

Siva is a godly paradox. His devotees like time, yet is also merciful. While personally indifferent to pleasures, he is worshipped as the male generative principle. In Siva we can see the Buddhist and Hindu principle that the same thing must underlie good and evil, wretchedness and salvation. Sivaism destroys illusions and attempts to teach us its followers to enter *liba*, the great game of life and joy. In this aspect, Siva is sometimes portrayed as his *tanja*, lord of the dances.

Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology



Film & Television

OUTLAND

Executive Producer: Stanley O'Toole

Producer: Richard A. Roth

Director: Peter Hyams

Screenplay: Peter Hyams

Music: Jerry Goldsmith

Cast

Sean Connery O'Neil
Peter Boyle Sheppard
Frances Sternhagen Lazarus
James B. Gailing Montano

With such new movie writer/director Peter Hyams seems to get a little bit better. His latest production, *Outland*, seems to live in nicely. Better than all of his other films, lacking many of his past mistakes, this new science fiction release, which seems to be basically *High Noon on Jupiter*, is a good, solid piece of summer fare. It is well worth a viewing, and is actually even better a second time.

Outland takes place on Io, a volcanic moon of Jupiter. Here, the Con-Am Corporation maintains a titanium mining operation. Everyone working there signs up for one-year shifts, unless they die on duty. The problem is that more and more people seem to be dying each month.

This fact upsets the mining operation's security marshal, O'Neil (Sean Connery), who decides to find out why the mortality rate is rising. Everyone on Io merely shrugs at the question of the deaths, answering that "people get like that here. Some guys just can't take it." The answer is not good enough for O'Neil.

Below the surface of Connery's character, we discover a complex set of motivations. He has begun to believe that he is among those who can't take it. Assigned from one company operation to another, each time worse than the one before it, he loses his son and his wife, and seems to be losing his future. He is a man without allies, without friends. Connery's subdued, quiet performance reveals a man who has come to the end of the line. Older and unheroic of himself though he may be, he does decide to make a stand.

On the surface, *Outland* is a story of drug abuse, corporate greed and insensitivity, and typical John Wayne western-film righteousness. Below the obvious, however, the film explores the terrors of identity loss, mechanization, and dehumanization.

In his last five films Connery has left behind the Bond image for good, revealing an ever-increasing range as a dramatic actor. Here he plays a character who is for more vulnerable than any other in his past experience. O'Neil's triumph at the film's end is made more dramatic simply because we know he isn't invincible. He is human; he bleeds, makes mistakes, is reckless, gets tired, is insensitive (at times), and can't even play a very good game of racquet ball.

He is, at the same time, courageous, loyal, honest and strong. He is strong in a physical sense, of course, but what garners him the audience's respect is his strength of character. He could easily do his job, save out his year, and get a better job of duty somewhere else merely by keeping his mouth shut and not making waves. But he is willing to buck the corrupt status quo, and he fights for what he thinks is right. His morality is outmoded. The company does not want him to stop the drug flow into Io. The workers who are dying from the drugs don't want their flow interrupted. Still, O'Neil acts because he knows what is happening is wrong. He is a hero because he goes up against overwhelming odds, knowing that he is probably going to lose. He must make the attempt, though, because he knows no other way to act and because, by that point, the only thing he has left is his honor; he refuses to let his integrity slide away from him. The way the rest of his life has.



Behind the intricate workings of O'Neil's character, however, the film has plenty to offer those who aren't primarily concerned with the people in their science fiction films. *Outland* contains a wealth of impressive special effects. Jupiter is perfect. Looming in the background, it is exactly represented down to its newly discovered ring. However, is the film's true morose piece. The Con-Am 27 mining operation is one of the most exactly detailed-perfect miniatures ever built for an American film. More impressive than the exterior of the mining operation, though, are the extensive sets which make up its insides. As Hyams envisioned it, there are no ray guns, lucite domes, conveyor belts or porma-pressed jump suits. In evidence, living space is at a premium, forcing the workers to herd into small functional units, which often a while begin to take on an almost penitentiary atmosphere.

Hyams explained: "The mining colony is a lost town, not a subject. A frontier is a hard, gritty, unpleasant place to be, and the people building it are always looking over their shoulders rather than ahead. Trying to stay alive and putting up with hell while making some quick, big money is the kind of commercial-venture Con-Am #27 is involved in."

Hyams' vision is complete. The workers' areas are tight and unfilled. Their quarters,

dominated by the bunk area, are nothing more than lovers of metallic, horizontal cages, one row piled atop the other, resembling pet or animal cubicles. The design called for the beds to be made of thermal foam so they could be hoisted down if it is like living in an aircraft carrier-sized submarine, and which never surfaced to see the sun.

The layout of the mining operation is designed functionally and logically. The worker's private quarters have no extra, no luxury. Only the general manager (Peter Boyle) has space to be grand. Even though the marshal has some extra room in his quarters, it is the general manager who's the king.

It is just this type of difference which is played upon throughout the film. The manager has casual clothing, a large, comfortable office, money, whoredom and power. The marshal has a uniform, small quarters, low pay, a run-away wife, and middle age insecurities. Everything on the surface of these two characters points to the general manager as being the better off of the two, which is why one has to look beneath the surface to examine their inner qualities to find the cowardice of corruption on the one hand and the strength of integrity on the other. In an age of the anti-hero, it is delightful to see a film hero torn with indecision and yet willing to take a moral stand and fight for what is right.

Despite the introspective nature of the sub-plots, *Outland* is not a slow-moving film by any means. The action is constant; the thrills and surprises are many. Despite its science fiction setting, *Outland*, like *Alien*, is really a mainstream film. *Alien* was a horror film; *Outland* a western. This is not a complaint, however.

Like science fiction literature, science fiction films have a tendency to rely on the typical simplistic hardware and conventions of the genre, rather than mold real character with convincing motivations. This depth of character has always been left for the mainstream film maker. Now that science fiction and fantasy are becoming more and more a part of the mainstream, however, the audiences are demanding greater respect for the characters' emotional level, and intelligence from the filmmakers.

Outland is a good movie, and not just for science fiction fans. Its success will undoubtedly inspire a few tired, low-grade imitations. Hopefully, it will inspire a few more solid, interesting and entertaining films as well.

Christopher John

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK

Producers: Larry Franco & Debra Hill

Director: John Carpenter

Screenplay: John Carpenter & Nick Castle

Music: John Carpenter in association with Alan Howarth

Cast

Kurt Russell	Snake Pliskens
Joe Van Cloot	Bob Hawk
Ernest Borgnine	Cables
Donald Pleasence	President of the US
Isaac Hayes	The Duke of New York
Susan Murphy	Chief of New York
Harry Dean Stanton	"Big Ben"
Adrienne Barbeau	Naggin

After the success of the small-budget horror film, *Halloween*, everyone keenly awaited to see what director John Carpenter would do next. When the movie, *The Fog* came out, cries were raised that Carpenter's career was over; those of little faith announced that he was a one-trick director who had already shot his bolt. These people had obviously forgotten his earlier works, such as *Assault on Precinct 13*, and *Elvis*. They must have also been extremely surprised when his newest film *Escape from New York* was released.

Escape takes place in 1997, a time when the island of Manhattan has been turned into a penal colony. Escape from this maximum security prison is impossible; the tunnels have been sealed and the bridges mined and walled. The Statue of Liberty has become a guard tower from which infra-red goggled officers can blast escaping prisoners on sight. Radar and rocket-firing helicopters track the island constantly, forcing the three million criminals inside to prey on each other for survival.

Into the decaying remains of New York is sent Snake Plissken; his mission is to rescue the President of the United States after Air Force One is sabotaged and purposely crashed in the center of the island. The President is carrying a tape cassette crucial to the survival of world peace (there has already been at least one more World War). The catch is that the tape must be presented to the Russians and Chinese at a summit conference within 24 hours, or the threat of another World War is almost certain. Plissken, both a war hero and a famous master criminal (everyone who comes across him in New York greets him with: "Snake Plissken. I thought you were dead.") is offered amnesty if he can go in, rescue the President, and bring both him and the tape out safely, inside of the 24-hour time limit. To insure his continued co-operation, two microscopic explosives are implanted in Snake's main arteries which will kill him instantly if they are allowed to detonate.

The film is fast-paced and logically developed. Snake invades New York by glider, landing atop the World Trade Center. From then on, his next 22 hours are a hell of sewers, fights, and back-alley chases. Surrounded by rats, cannibals, and three million hardened criminals, he struggles to save the President and win his freedom.

Escape is Carpenter's best work to date, much more entertaining than *The Fog*. He has taken the old "one-man-might-succeed-where-an-army-couldn't" storyline and has

decorated it with a fine cast and an extremely well thought out collection of sets and locations. (Most of the film was not shot in New York, but no one would ever be able to tell.) He has produced one of the best straight out action/adventure films of the summer.

Carpenter's vision of New York is a bleak, fire-lit one, the entire film taking place either at night, or inside poorly illuminated buildings. Very few sets were actually constructed for the film, although those which were are incredibly believable and elaborate. The central control center for the United States Police Force is more than the usual display of flashing lights and computers. Working video monitors offering three-dimensional readouts adorn the headquarters, and other recognizable bits of hard and software blend together to give the center a solid, functional look. By not setting the story too far in the future, Carpenter's presentation of things to come feels more believable simply through the high recognition values of known sights in the city. Coupled with the sets which make up the massive wall supposedly surrounding New York, Carpenter lulls one's disbelief in a rather outrageous plot situation.

Escape is not a special effects picture, however. Its main concern is with the people involved. Relying on a number of performers he has used before, Carpenter creates a realistic interplay among his characters. As usual, his bit players are a trifle too wooden, but they are on and off the screen quickly, doing little damage to the flow of the picture. For instance, in the opening sequences, there are a number of dully delivered lines from some of the secondary actors. Such moments are forgotten, however, when Kurt Russell and Lee Van Cleef exchange their pointed witticisms and ripostes. Carpenter has a talent for showcasing his stars which shines throughout *Escape*.

Another talent Carpenter has in abundance is his ability to inject humor into a dark situation without breaking the pace of his film. It worked well in *Halloween*; it works even better in *Escape*. The continuing "I thought you were dead" routines and the character of Cabbie (Ernest Borgnine) show Carpenter's ease with, and yet tight control over, humorous elements. Both of these running bits are used carefully through the picture and offer a necessary change of pace, as any good bit of continuing humor should do in a serious drama.

Of course, like any picture of this kind, *Escape from New York* is not a classic. It is solid summer entertainment of unusually high caliber. By not pretending to be more than it is, but by also not settling for any less than it could be, *Escape* becomes an exciting, fast-moving drama, the likes of which we haven't seen in years. Using a new, imaginative setting for what seemed to be a tired plot line, Carpenter has presented us with one of the better films of the summer.

Christopher John

DRAGONSLAYER

Producer: Hal Barwood

Director: Matthew Robbins

Screenplay: Hal Barwood & Matthew Robbins

Music: Alex North

Special Effects Supervisor (British): Brian Johnson

Cast

Peter MacNicol	.....	Galen
Caitlin Clarke	.....	Valerian
Ralph Richardson	.....	Ulrich
John Hallam	.....	Tyrian
Albert Salmi	.....	Greil
Peter Eyre	.....	Casiodorus Rex

After the death knell rang following the release of the simply dismal *Clash of the Titans*, few people expected much from the upcoming Paramount Pictures/Walt Disney production of *Dragonslayer*. Most moviegoers felt *Clash* would prove that stop-frame animation would look spectacular on the big screen and using the newer color film stocks. If anyone could pull off such a feat, they assumed, it would be master stop-frame technician Ray Harryhausen. Unfortunately, he couldn't, and *Clash* went down the drain. Thus, the feeling arose that *Dragonslayer's* dragon would prove to be a fairly mawkish creature.

Luckily, such is not the case. There is no doubt that *Dragonslayer* is destined to be a genre classic; it may be the best giant monster movie made by an American company. (With *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Dragonslayer* proving so popular, Paramount Pictures should be feeling quite comfortable by the end of the year.)

The film starts at Castle Cragganmore, the home of the world's last enchanter, Ulrich. A delegation of peasants has come to beg his aid in ridding their land of a dragon which has settled in their midst.

The dragon's rage is mollified twice yearly by an offering of young virgins. The victims are chosen by lottery and left chained in a prescribed ritual for the dragon to devour. Those who live in the kingdom are tired of sacrificing their daughters. The problem is that there is no sure way of eradicating the monster. Warriors tried in the past, losing their lives and provoking the beast to massive retaliations.

Some villagers feel that Ulrich can stop the dragon and are willing to take the chance. The king, however, does not care to rouse the beast. While the delegation is with Ulrich, the king's man, Tyrian, appears and slays the ancient wizard. The enchanter's apprentice, Galen, offers to slay the dragon in his master's stead, and leaves with the villagers; during their trek Tyrian slays the boy's servant as a last warning to stay away.

Galen refuses to listen. Armed with Ulrich's most powerful amulet, he attacks the monster's lair, burying it beneath an entire mountain. He is celebrated as a hero, but it turns out he has not slain the dragon. It bursts from its lair and wreaks havoc across the countryside, forcing Galen to face it again, and yet one last time.

There is much more to the story than this, but it would be unfair to reveal it. Barwood and Robbins have taken a simple story line, and added a number of inventive, interesting twists and surprises which would be ruined if mentioned here. There is a lady for Galen, a secret to Ulrich's death, and many surprises, but the most important thing in the film is Vermithrax Pejorative, the dragon.

Vermithrax, a 40-foot, two-ton giant with a 90-foot wingspan, was responsible by itself for a quarter of the film's 16 million dollar budget. Britain's Brian Johnson,

[continued on page 29]



Media

Curse of the Coaxial Cable Creature

The word *television* no longer implies mere commercial pap, as it did a decade ago. Computer links, video games, and cable-movie channels have broadened the medium, bringing it closer to the limits such a tool might have originally inspired. But this diversification brings with it a slightly Dr. Jekyll-and-Mr. Hyde odor—the idea behind it all seems to be to keep you at home, in front of that little, glowing screen as much as possible.

The lad of home-subscription movie channels—perhaps the largest point of contention in the recent *Winter's Guild* strike against film studios—offers limboing, as an art, both life and death. Before an exploration of this paradox, though, a brief aside on the nature of art and audience:

One factor in the recent deterioration of the movie-going experience (that is, seeing a film in a theatre) is the brace of viewing habits ingrained by watching television that many audiences bring into the theatre, in effect, playing on its game by the rules of another. The incommensurability of many current films to many current audiences is, in many cases, due not to the density of a film, but to the Cyclopsian TV eyeball audiences insist on ransacking as an esthetic filter once inside the theatre. Commercial TV asks little attention in return for its endlessly recycled melodramas and clichéd comedies, because selling products is its central interest. The result, as Pauline Kael pointed out, is that TV babies have an attention span the length of an average commercial, and since all those 60-second messages are identical (and equally ignorable) it never occurs to a TV viewer that one given minute may be more important than another one. While the sponge method works peachy for something as non-demanding as TV, the audience hallucination that greets any film more cerebrally complex than *Chinatown* or *Cheerleaders* proves that it is not the road to fulfillment inside a theatre. Movies are not merely "big TV," and therein lies the loophole that makes cable movie services something less than wonderful.

A prime selling point for cable-movie vendors is the perceptive word *uncut*. Despite contractual clauses guaranteeing for directors editing rights for commercial TV on their own films, the results are nonetheless horrifying. Networks may legally chop out entire sections of a film, rearrange the remaining bits, loop in altered dialogue and sell the resulting Frankensteiner mess with up to 28 commercials per hour. Those who wait to see theatrical movies "for free" on commercial TV ultimately pay up in a far more mind-numbing coinage.

Uncut proved to be a heavy piece of selling artillery to those for whom the solution to substandard movies on TV was finding a way to make viewers pay admission without leaving their houses. Why trudge out in the street to see a movie when you could see it—*uncut*—at home?

Cable systems have fairly straightforward advantages. They may readily serve invalids and children. With rape, they make a great reference tool for movie buffs and columnists alike. In a crunch, they are obviously better than nothing. Many home box offices scoop up features which suffered either truncated runs, or no runs at all, being dumped by their distributors onto overseas markets as a tax loss sale with *Thrust* and *The Ultimate Warrior*, respectively. In this sense, cable may serve the genre completist, but in another, they restrict their own comprehensiveness willingly. That one's moment.

The drawbacks to subscription channels have mostly to do with their poor physical representation of what might have originally been a 70mm, 8-track, Dolbyized extravaganza (like *Alien*). The TV receivers to which such systems must conform offer shrunken, distorted images (due to the size and scanning limitations of a cathode-ray tube), rotten sound (about which manufacturers keep making lavish promises and have, to date, done nothing practical), and the restrictions of TV aspect-ratio, which causes the elongated rectangle of a movie frame to be cropped into a square. With this last, the 70mm, Cinemascope and Panavision formats suffer even more, and in the case of "big-screen" video-beam and other picture-enlarging gimmicks, the problem is the same. That distorted, tiny picture is blown up to bestrut size, and only the viewer's headache really gets bigger. It looks okay across the distance of a smoky cocktail lounge, with a scotch or two to smooth away the fuzzy staining lines.

One prejudice pay/cable end commercial TV have in common regarding movies is a sickness for current films, a sickness that undercuts true completeness in programming for the former. Frequently, pay/cable is too eager to snatch up new films in favor of recent films, which languish unseen after their premiere theatrical runs.

Most new films now have cable deals written into their contracts before they ever appear in a theatre; films made exclusively for cable sell with us already. These moves are self-profit considerations, of course—that theatrical filmgoers sneeze continually on an endangered species due to such machinations is another annoying byproduct of what the electronics corporations who crank out all this shiny, new video hardware call progress.

Unless you own a private screening room, you must go OUT to get real movies. While the distractions of the home environment may not detract from *Buck Rogers*, they just might from *Apocalypse Now*, cut or uncut. Movies on TV and movies in theatres might seem the same to the people pushing cable-TV, subscription service and "Z" channels, but the only people to whom they really are the same thing are the indiscriminate.

David J. Schow

Books

- Star Drifter**, Dale Aycock, Leisure Books, \$4.96
Vampires of Nightward, David Buschell, Del Rey Books, \$2.25
Spies Doctor, Les Carrey, Del Rey Books, \$2.50
War Games, Kari Mussen, Playboy Press, \$2.50
Homeworld, Wheelworld, Starworld
To the Stars, Gary Harrison, Bantam Books, \$2.25 each
Schrodinger's Cat II: The Trick Top Hat, Robert Anton Wilson, Pocket Books, \$2.50

Among the *Aras* feedback questions is one asking readers to indicate which single category of science fiction and which single category of fantasy they prefer. Thirty-four percent usually choose space opera for SF and sword and sorcery for fantasy. Eleven percent choose "hard SF" and four percent choose "new wave." Feedback game proposals mirror this response: hard SF proposals (*The Human-Kim Wars*, *Dragon's Egg*, etc.) continually get lower ratings than trash SF proposals (*Night of the Androids*, *Rescue from the Hive*, etc.). The preferences of "adventure" and simulation games seem to run counter to the trends evident in science fiction: once Campbell took the helm at *Asimov's* in the thirties and began to turn SF from a pulp genre to a form of literature. At the same time, gaming is bringing thousands of new readers into the science fiction fold, the renaissance of fantasy in SF publishing is largely attributable to the popularity of role-playing games. The trend toward trash is reinforced by the movies, which prefer to do space opera (*Star Wars* and clones) than serious SF (of which there has been a dearth since 1950).

Simultaneously, book publishers are beginning to speak of SF as the next equivalent of gothic romance (this despite the fact that *Star Trek*, fantasy, and feminist SF have brought increasing numbers of women into science fiction in the same way that role-playing games have brought increasing numbers into gaming). There is talk of "formalizing" the genre in the way that romances have been formalized. Laser Books, indeed, took precisely this approach and failed, but it may simply have been before its time. There is a real and increasing danger that science fiction, which was the only pulp genre to escape from its limitations to the status of literature, will undergo a reverse evolution and become, again, nothing more than another form of income-generating garbage.

Aras readers owe it to themselves—and to the literature for which they have some feeling—to reconsider their preferences. Devotees of *D&D* may feel that, in the abstract, sword and sorcery most describes the kind of fantasy they enjoy reading, but it is Conan and Edgar Rice Burroughs who come to mind as great writers of fantasy, or Tolkien, Donaldson, Wolfe, Le Guin, and Bradley? Science fiction gamers may think *Star Wars* is the kind of science fiction they



would like to see, but is E.E. Doc Smith their mentor — sf Asimov, Heinlein, Niven, Elton, or Wilson? In the Green Planet or The Sword of the Sorcerers? Imperium or Attack of the Mutants?

That being said, we will proceed to review some space s'pers, which, s'fter all, is enjoyable if not the best and end-of

All of this is by way of introduction to .. no, I'd better not put it that way. All of this is not by way of introduction to, because *Star Doctor* by Dale Aycock is quite an enjoyable little — dare I say it? — space opera, yes, quite enjoyable, and I don't wish to imply that it is caught in the pre-Campbell era or that it is enough to turn one's stomach. Quite the contrary. It is worth reading even if your taste is hard SF, though perhaps new readers will find it a little recapitulation of overdone themes. The peculiarity is that it is published by Leisure Books, one of the smaller publishers in comparison to the giant conglomerates. Aycock is an appealing writer who deserves better distribution than Leisure may be able to provide.

The novel deals with the owner of a small interstellar trading company, threatened with bankruptcy as a result of pressure from the Federation — a sort of combination M's Ball, Teamsters and Lloyds of London which wants the protagonist to sign up with them. He makes the mistake of falling in love with the heir to a planet, uncovering an interstellar conspiracy designed to impose tyranny on the galaxy, and so on and so on. The importance is not the plot, which is typical space opera, but Aycock's ability to flesh out characters despite slam-bang action and to turn a pretty phrase in two. *Star Doctor* is fun reading.

Karl Hansen's *War Games* is hardly classical space opera, indeed, its sexual themes are such that it could not have been published in the thirties. Nonetheless, it contains enough rapid action and meaningless violence to satisfy even the most frustrated Leansman aficionado. The protagonist is a scion of the rich in a pathetically decadent Terran empire restricted to the solar system — so decadent, in fact, that one suspects Hansen is saying "if you think modern America is decadent you ain't seen nothing." There's enough sadomasochism in the novel to choke Catherine the Great's horse. Although I've read worse. Its saving grace is Hansen's imagination, which is remarkable. Hansen has given a great deal of thought to the potentials of biological engineering; the results are a series of bizarre and believable alien races bioengineered from human genes and capable of living, for example, in Titan's hydrocarbon atmosphere. Hansen seems well versed in biology and chemistry, though his physics leaves a bit to be desired.

Detra, the protagonist, kills his parents to avoid their sadistic games and, with the aid of a gem with temporal powers, becomes an interplanetary thief. Eventually he is caught and sentenced to imprisonment. Instead, he chooses to join the Empire's equivalent to the Green Berets, fighting a no-win war in Titan. The nature's favors he on Titan is quite reminiscent of Vietnam, and one wonders whether Hansen saw combat there. Detra loses his precious stone and, as chaos

falls on Titan and the Terrans begin to lose, searches for a replacement. In the process his slaughterer thousands, becomes addicted, goes cold turkey, meets his love and switches sides in the ongoing war. The climax is satisfying, but there's a clear bid for a sequel. (The novel was originally printed as a series of short stories, mostly in *Analog*, so one presumes that Hansen sees the story as an ongoing serial.)

War Games is involving and evocative; Hansen's descriptions of the Titanian scenery are believable and even lyrical. If, in the final analysis, *War Games* does not rise above the status of — that phrase again — space opera, the reason is that his characters are robots, there's very little warmth, and the protagonist is so bloody miserable it's hard to have much feeling for him. Finally, *War Games* has nothing to do with wargames.

As long as we're talking of space opera, we should certainly consider Harry Harrison's *To the Stars*, published in three volumes as *Homeworld*, *Wheelworld*, and *Starworld*, since Harrison is both the master artist of the genre and a practitioner thereof. *To the Stars* can safely be described as "action SF," though the more pejorative term "space opera" should probably be avoided, since the action is not so relentless as space opera requires and since Harrison is apparently trying to write something more.

To the Stars is written in the sparse, neutral style that is often accepted in science fiction as good writing — the sort of style which Asimov, in his later fiction, used so well. The story deals with a class-stratified, totalitarian future in which the elite of Earth have inserted not only that planet's masses but the rest of the settled planets as well. The protagonist of the three novels is Jan Kulozik, an upper-class engineer who eventually rejects his heritage and becomes one of the leaders of the revolution. The three novels divide logically into three stories: the first is "the man who learned better," in which the protagonist becomes aware of the tyranny of his society. The second is "man against nature," in which Kulozik overcomes the obstacles of the alien world to which he is banished for his rebellion. The last is "the revolution," in which Kulozik, the Israelis and friends overthrow the oppressors and bring freedom to the stars. All three themes are common ones, all are competently handled.

Harrison is best known in this genre for his satirical adventure stories — fast action written with an element of wit. *Bill, the Galactic Hero* and *The Stainless Steel Rat* stories come to mind. It seems clear that Harrison is trying to do something a little different — to write serious in the sense of non-humorous science fiction with something to say. Unfortunately, *To the Stars* is nothing more than competent adventure fiction. Harrison's characters are wooden, his prose contains little life, and when he engages in political commentary he generally stoops to the absurd. (The worst offense in this regard is his discussion of racism in America, a subject about which Harrison knows a good deal less than he thinks he knows.) Nonetheless, Harrison is incapable of writing a bad novel, and *To the Stars* is a fairly enjoyable way to kill some time.

Lee Correy is a G. Harry Stine writer in another subset of the genre for which I have little regard: super-science. Super-science, in essence, hard science fiction taken to extremes: fiction in which the ideas and the machinery are all, and in which characterization and story-telling often fall by the wayside. Like space opera, super-science can be a fun media enjoyable reading, witness *Dragon's Egg* but is not a literature to be taken seriously. Lee Correy is a good enough writer as well as good enough technologist to overcome the shortcomings of the genre, however; his most super-science novels, *Star Driver* (about a working Deen Drive) is still enjoyable as a novel.

Space Doctor is, in essence, another "man against nature" novel — though in this case, nature is vacuum, radiation, and the other hazards to be found in geosynchronous orbit.

The hero of *Space Doctor*, Dr. Tom Noels, is the on-site medic during construction of the first Solar Power satellite. He's faced with a unique task: for the first time, hundreds of men and women are working for lengthy periods of time in space, and the most, practically single-handed, develop the field of space medicine to prevent accidents and death. His problems range from the trivial — how do you use a bottle-fad mineral-saline solution when there's no gravity to feed the salt solution into the vein? — to the stuff of legend — how do you save a busted ship whose crew members are slowly dying of asphyxiation? Sardonically, he must deal with the nuts in the federal bureaucracy — who want to class down the entire operation because of a minor mechanical problem in the space suits — and his own personal problems.

Space Doctor drags a bit, and the love interest uses one of the oldest tricks around, but on the whole it is an interesting novel, well worth reading — especially for those interested in near-future exploitation of space.

David Bischoff's *Vampires of Nightworld* is sequel to his previous novel, *Nightworld*. There is a sort of subgenre of novels which are fantasy-but-really-SF, if you follow, though none that I know of reverses the trick. *Nightworld* is such a world. In the previous volume, we learned that the fantastic creatures crawling Nightworld's night were actually cyborgs created by a madman calling himself "Satán," whom our hero (with some aid put in) and to *Vampires* deals with the aftermath, and so Satán's underlings, a vampire, decides to subjugate Nightworld and become its new master of evil, naturally, our intrepid hero must stop him. Improperly handled, this might have been a sterile recapitulation of a theme adequately handled in the previous book. Bischoff's somewhat Victorian style and the cozy Victorianism of his characters are quite charming. The reader comes to care about the characters much more than in the first book, and the adventures remain believable while retaining an element of the fantastic. His vampires are also quite interesting, being a variant of the "demon bacteria" theme, vampirism is a communicable disease, in essence, with viral colonies gradually taking over the body of the afflicted. *Vampires of Nightworld* is a pleasant fantasy for SF.

NEW!

SPI IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE

Dragonquest

Second Edition

A complete and coherent revision and enhancement of the most powerful, open-ended fantasy role-playing system in print! Available two great ways:

☆ A beautiful hardbound book containing the complete Second Edition revision plus a starting adventure. 160 pages, full-color cover, two-color text pages, 8 1/2" x 11" large book format.

☆ Bookcase boxed version including softcover edition with three-hole punch pages for binder use; Gamesmaster Screen (2nd Edition); softcover 8 1/2" x 11", 24-page adventure booklet, *The Blade of Affection*; and two 20-sided high-quality Gamescience dice.

New Features in the 2nd Edition

Completely new combat system — designed to allow speedy combat resolution in campaigns, yet still has a satisfying sense of realism. Note that the first edition combat system is still usable (by those who prefer it) with the second edition of *Dragonquest*.

Improved experience points system — now your characters can make delineable and tangible gains within the context of a campaign.

One handy book — whether it's the high-quality hardcover edition or the convenient paperback, punched-edition — you now have it all in one well-made book produced by one of America's finest book printer-manufacturers. The paper used is high quality, with acid-free sheets which, unlike cheap, flimsy and publications, will not yellow or crumble with a few years' age (in fact, with reasonable care, the book will last as long as you do).

**NOW AVAILABLE
NATIONWIDE**

Hardcover Book: \$14 Boxed Version: \$20

Winner
of the Origins 81
Award for
Best
Role-Playing
Game



A DragonQuest Capsule Adventure

The Camp of Alla-Akabar

I. Introduction

The Camp of Alla-Akabar is a DragonQuest adventure to be played in about eight hours by one or two players with one character each. It is designed to be presented as a single adventure, although it can only be incorporated into an existing campaign.

Before play begins, the GM should read and familiarize himself with the character descriptions and possible situations. The Camp of Alla-Akabar is best primarily on the players discerning clues presented to them by the GM during encounters. Further explanation starts in Chapter IV.

II. How to Read the Maps

Two maps are provided with the adventure, one for the overland journey and one for the layout of the camp. Both measures are on hex grids; the scale for the overland map is 1 hex/2 miles, and the scale for the camp is 1 hex/5 feet. Note: if the GM wishes to place the adventure on the *Frontiers of Alusia* map, he should use Ingbar (hex 30-098) as the town and Korvin's Will (hex 43-099) as the oasis. This does not admit description to fit if he does make this change.

III. Briefing for the Players

After many weeks of travel, the characters arrive in a large coastal town with then resources dangerously low. The characters find an inn and have dinner. After their meal, the bartender starts an conversation with the characters, as they are new faces in town. Explaining their plight and need for employment, they are told of the public notices posted in the town square.

The characters adjourn to the square, where they indeed find notices of openings. Only one draws their interest:

ENTERTAINERS WANTED

Seeking skilled male and/or female entertainers for engagement in small settlements beyond the mountains. Must be willing to travel through rugged

terrain. Prime Domes need not apply.

See Rory at the Inn of the Daring Damsel between sundown and closing.

A few simple questions around town inform the characters that beyond the mountains lies the desert, where there are reports of marauding tribes of bandits. Few people from the town have any reason to go into the desert, as they rely upon trade arriving in town to supply all their needs.

At the Inn of the Daring Damsel, the characters are led to a back room, where they meet a halfling who introduces himself as Rory. He will ask them their specialties as entertainers as well as request a brief demonstration of their best work.

If sufficiently impressed with the audition, Rory will explain that he is acting as an agent for a travelling band in the desert who is seeking some diversion after completing a long and exhausting trek. He will ask questions about the characters' abilities to handle themselves in tight situations, as there is a chance the audition may become rowdy and downright unruly.

If the characters fill the bill, Rory will take their names, saying they have a good chance. He will answer any questions the characters have about where and for whom they may be employed.

Rory explains, in answer to any questions, that he is the personal manservant for Alla-Akabar, a leader of a tribe of bedonk who have spent the better part of the last year to the north. They rest near their mountain every year around this time; the tribe leaves the town alone, so no one bothers the tribe. Rory is in town to pick up supplies for the camp and find suitable entertainment for them. Transportation will be provided to and from the camp, and the engagement should be no longer than a week. For these shows, the characters will be paid by Alla 500 Silver Pennies, plus whatever gratuities are thrown from the crowd.

Later that evening, the characters are approached by a man wearing a cape whose face is shadowed by a large hood. He asks if he may talk with them and introduces himself as Xarak. Wondering if they are contemplating taking the employment in the camp of Alla-Akabar, he informs them that — if they are — he has an offer which may be of interest to them.

He is seeking information concerning two women, named Kirona and Shynia, who were taken by the tribe almost a year ago. He

wishes to know where they may be and what, if anything, has happened to them. He says he does not care how this information is obtained, as long as it is the truth.

He further informs them that he is offering a bounty. He will pay them 300 Gold Shillings each to get the information, and he will add on 200 Gold Shillings more if, in addition to getting the information, they can eliminate Alla-Akabar and bring back some proof that he is dead.

If the characters accept the offer, Xarak will stress that this is of the essence, and the information retrieval and the killing should be accomplished as quickly as possible. Xarak will stay to answer any questions he can (see Chapter IV), and then he will bid the characters good night and good luck.

Later that night, Rory appears and fills the characters with their been hired on as entertainers and will meet them late in the morning by the stables with horses and mules packed for the journey to the camp.

When they meet Rory, they will immediately leave and set out toward the mountains. At the end of that day, they follow a ravine and arrive at the edge of the desert. There the halfling starts transferring the supplies to a number of camels which he tethered there on his way into town. The next morning, after making sure that everyone is clothed properly to guard against the dangers of crossing the desert (see Chapter V), the party goes on across the sands.

After two days of travel, the party enters the camp of Alla-Akabar.

IV. Briefing for the Gamesmaster

The Camp of Alla-Akabar is designed such that at least one character should be able to skillfully maintain the camp. They should not be allowed to look it without failure. Thus, Troubadour or Courtisan skills are needed, and creative use of Talent Magic would come in handy. An Assassin skill might help in the attempt to kill Alla.

Rory and Xarak were filling the truth as far as they went; in fact, they are working together. Xarak has been waiting for Alla's tribe to make this annual encampment near the town. He waited for word of Rory's arrival in town and approached him about the possibility of an alliance. Rory was open to such an offer, as he is becoming more and more disgruntled with the treatment he receives in camp. He was leery of becoming too involved, as Alla has shown qualities of omission. Xarak explained how he could keep Rory separate from the schemer by approaching the entertainers after Rory informed him who the most likely candidates were. Note: If the GM incorporates this adventure into his campaign, he may have to go through several characters before finding suitable ones.

There are some things, other than his complexity, which Xarak will not discuss with the party. If questioned, he will give a description of the two women (see Chapter VI for details), but he will not reveal that they are really his wife and daughter, who were kidnapped a tad. He will not tell the party

their daughter wears an amulet similar to his, as he believes she is not in the camp. The GM should refer to Xarak's description in this Chapter for full details concerning the amulet and Xarak's appearance.

Rory will give the physical details of the camp as he knows them, and he will speak of the people in the camp during the overland trip. Full descriptions of the camp and its inhabitants are covered in Chapters VI and VII.

There are three neither Xarak nor Rory can know which present major obstacles to the party in completing the mission. It is up to the players to piece together the clues obtained through encounters with NPCs. Among these facts are the following:

1. The daughter has become Alla-Akabar's mistress.
2. The daughter is being kept drugged.
3. Alla's bodyguard, Garn, is a Hobbobin who is much more than he appears to be.

There is also a time factor to be considered. Xarak has told the party the deed must be done quickly. While he was discussing the deal with Rory, a bedouin from the camp who had come into town on his own had overheard their plotting. Xarak and Rory managed to capture him and keep him alive, trying to get information out of him, but he will not talk. They have decided to proceed with their scheme. At the end of three days, or at the GM's discretion, this captive will have managed to escape and made his way to the camp, arriving early on the morning of the fourth day to reveal Rory's treachery. Xarak will not mention the captive to the party, as he fears this would cause them to think again about his proposal and not mind down.

Xarak is in his mid-forties. He is very mysterious, because he wishes to maintain a low profile for fear of repercussions from his revenge. He is not trained as a fighter, although he has gotten some instruction in the use of a dagger, to be well under no circumstances accompany the party. He is obsessed with gaining what he feels is his rightful revenge, but his plans finding his wife and daughter are even higher. Xarak's physical characteristics are:

PS: 12 MD: 13 AG: 11 MA: 6
PB: 10 EN: 14 FT: 18 WP: 22
PC: 13 APA: 9

Xarak has no magical abilities, and he is a mortal man. He is a Rank 10 Mechanic and a Rank 5 Mechanic. He speaks Common and Elvish in Rank 3, and reads and writes Common at Rank 1. He carries a dagger concealed in his cloak and can use it in Rank 5.

Xarak's hair and beard are grey with white in the temples. His left cheek is scarred and shows no sign of ever receiving the care of a healer. His face has become a permanent mask of grimace and resolution. His eyes are always weary and slightly glazed with obsession.

Xarak's description should only be given by the GM if the players are inquisitive and ask for it. If they do, the GM should indicate that Xarak is wearing an amulet with a stylized design of a bird in flight. It is an heirloom

and a hint in diameter and shows a high quality of workmanship.

Xarak spent many years building up a profitable system of trade routes and running a sizable fortune. He met Karena during one of his journeys and they were soon wed. Shyrla, their daughter, was the pride of Xarak, and he loves her dearly. He had taken her and Karena on one of his trading journeys when she turned 16 as he believed this would begin learning about the world. It was during that trip that his caravan was attacked by Alin's men and his wife and daughter abducted.

Xarak survived the attack, just barely, and was left for dead until found by some peaceful nomads. Since then, he has traveled in hope of uncovering news of his family's fate, until it became obvious there was only one place to find out...in the camp of Alla-Akabar. Realizing he lacked the proper training to execute such a mission, he began to formulate plans.

Xarak will stay in town until the party arrives or he receives word that Alla is dead or is searching for the man behind the plot to assassinate him.

If Xarak's daughter is returned to him in good health, he will furnish a reward of an additional 500 Gold Shillings on the party.

V. The Desert

It is important to retain the flavor of the desert nomadic life throughout the adventure. This should begin when the party transfers their supplies to the camel in the nomadic camp. If one of the characters is a Ranger specializing in Wast, the GM must decide how aware of survival techniques in the desert he is.

Travel in the desert with a horse is impossible, as the beast will become exhausted and die trying to make it through the soft sand. By the same token, a character will find walking through the desert with the aid of a specialized Ranger will fall into the Medium Exhaustion range on the Fatigue and Endurance Table. Without the specialized Ranger, walking falls into the Heavy Exercise range. This fatigue loss applies only if the characters have taken some precautions against dehydration and exposure (wrapping themselves in burnooses or some sort of flowing robe-like garments). If the character must make a hasty exit without such precautions, they will lose one Endurance Point for every day exposed, in addition to the fatigue loss. The GM should give some indication of these consequences during the adventure, as the party's escape should be planned as fast they may do on their way back.

There is a further loss of 1/2 Endurance Point per 4-hour period if the party lingers to wait in the desert. Also, wearing any armor other than cloth will result in another loss of 1/2 Endurance Point per day, multiplied by the armor's weight factor.

The GM should consult the Endurance Chart (see Chapter VIII) for the possibility of sandstorms and their effect upon the party if they are caught in one.

If members of the party have lost half their original Endurance, there is a 50%

chance per day that hallucinations will set in, or they may start to wander aimlessly.

VI. Description of Non-Player Characters

1. ALLA-AKABAR

Somewhere in his thirties, the charismatic and handsome Jomai Shini is a good role model. Alla-Akabar leads his band of 45 bedouins in a life of prosperous pillaging and looting. He is always charming, and his men are fiercely loyal to him, ready to eliminate any who pose a threat to him. Alla is Sun accepted, and his physical characteristics are:

PS: 12 MD: 18 AG: 14 MA: 6
PB: 21 EN: 14 FT: 22 WP: 19
PC: 15 APA: 10

Alla is a Rank 10 Military Scientist, a Rank 6 Ranger (specializing in Wast), a Rank 5 Healer, Rank 2 Thief, Rank 3 Conjuror, and a Rank 10 Battlemaster specializing in Great Land Monuments, Hominoids, and Lizards. He uses a Scimitar and a Bolo in Rank 7. In camp, he rarely goes about armed, relying on his men's loyalty and the protection of Garn. He can speak, read, and write Common and Bedouin at Rank 8, and speak Hobbobin at Rank 5.

Alla has become almost a demi-god to his men. He treats them fairly when it comes to dividing treasure and captives. Women. His men have prospered under his command. The bedouins have stayed with him for a long time, and some have come back on a regular basis, as they respect and revere him as a leader.

Allin continually amazes his men by anticipating their wishes. If a man expresses fear, Allin is soon there to comfort him without anyone reporting the circumstances. Other examples of past behavior include...

...A man who received word that his family was being thrown out of their home for non-payment of rent was presented with a fine gem from Alla's own collection and aided in returning to his home. The man and the camp were overjoyed by this unexpected generosity.

...Several times overly greedy bedouins plotted to steal from the general fund. Before any of their plans came to light, Alla had them whipped, claiming their ill intent was known to him, and he knew they had to be punished.

...The few times plots have been hatched to assassinate Allin, he always seemed to know about them even at the ideas formed. He has dealt with these types most fairly.

Alla, while a brilliant tactician and awesome warrior, does not so flamboyance. He enjoys the adoration of his men and cultivates it. He views each man as a part of his own family, to be treated with kindness and tolerance. Outsiders are another matter. Alla, while he may only punish members of the tribe, will swiftly execute visitors who break rules or try to bring ill to his men.

He does have one weakness, though: Alla is quite a ladies' man. Female visitors to the camp will find themselves the object of his attentions if they are fairly pretty. Alla has always had first choice of female captives and his men acknowledge this right. This situation does not please Alla's wife, but it never seems to bother his mistress.

There is a very definite reason for Alla's ommission, a mystical power: GARN.

2. GARN

Violators to the camp, who are introduced to Alla, will not help but notice the rather large individual who usually accompanies Alla: his bodyguard, Garn.

Garn is a hobgoblin who usually dresses in little more than pants. It is often seen wandering aimlessly about the camp carrying his war club or whip. The bedonin do not socialize with Garn for several reasons. One is that Garn is physically intimidating, being slightly more than seven feet tall and rather imposingly muscled, covered with coarse dark hair. Also, Garn does not push himself when Alla calls for it. He may flog, beat him, or flatly tell the offender and do all this without giving him out to dry in the sun. The third reason they do not communicate is that Garn does not speak and seems to understand only Hobgoblin.

Alla speaks fluent Hobgoblin, so he can issue orders to Garn, and in public Alla "speaks" only to Alla through use of sign language. Because of Garn's apparent ignorance, the bedonins have no fear about voicing their opinion of him or speaking freely while he is around. But they never stop Garn when he touches his head through the opening to their tent or helps him lift a piece of meat or food as they hear he tells it. Garn's physical characteristics are:

PS: 21 MD: 16 AG: 15 MA: 20
PB: 6 EN: 16 FT: 23 WP: 12
PC: 14 APA: 10

NA: Hides bears 2 Damage Points.

Garn is Death incarnate, uses his War Club at Rank 4, his Scimitar at Rank 5, his Whip at Rank 10, and both his Garrote and Spear at Rank 3. He is also a Rank 5 Assassin, Rank 7 Ranger (specialized in Wits), and has Rank 5 with Sleight.

In truth, Garn is neither mute nor stupid. He is in fact very practiced Adept of the College of Necromantic Conjurations and has the following spells in his ranks (Spell Code/Rank Achieved): T-1/6; G-1/6; G-3/5; G-6/3; G-7/10; G-9/3; G-10/10; Q-1/1; S-1/4. He also speaks, reads, and writes Hobgoblin, Common, and Bedonin at Rank 9.

Garn's potential was recognized early by a powerful alchemist of the College of Necromantic Conjurations who took in the young hobgoblin as a protégé. Garn learned quickly and decided to seek his fortune in the civilized world. Although Garn entered town well dressed and obviously cultured, the townspeople reacted to him as to a monster and fell upon him. After resoundingly beating them, he dragged him down to the river and threw him unceremoniously in.

This entire episode was witnessed by a much younger Alla-Akabar, who was at the

time a third-rank initiate. He did not share the people's revulsion to Garn, and, although they dispersed, dove in to rescue the hobgoblin. Garn listened to Alla's proposal separately they were ineffectual, but if they worked together they could become a potent force. Garn considered the words carefully and finally decided to throw in his lot with Alla, who soon formed his band.

Garn's main advantage through the camp is responsibility for Alla's ommission. Since the mist speaks freely while he is about, he is in a perfect position to eavesdrop. He reports everything to Alla, who acts upon the information he thus obtains.

Garn is often last to leave having to play the killing brute, as he gets to be intelligent conversation from anyone but Alla. He spends his nights in the tent next to Alla's practicing his spells and rituals. His main sure thing is about it. He accepts Alla's petcharms for lavishly loving and winsome women, but swears Alla they will prove his demise.

If the party decides to test Garn and manages to surprise him, there is a chance he will utter some simple words if he fails to resist his Perception.

3. ALLA'S MISTRESS

Alla is rarely seen about the camp without the company of his young mistress. She is a lovely young girl with raven black hair and light blonde hair, who spends most of her day looking about the tent or just outside or hanging out with Alla's friends. She is always displaying her devotion to Alla and her love for him is obvious. She wears both a girl's silk and some braided rings, and other jewelry. If the party touches out the jewelry, they will find it to be first class work, especially her amulet — one of a half inch in diameter, bearing a stylized design of a bird in flight. She never utters a word by name, just "Alla's Woman" or by Alla as his "Little Flower" or "Star of the Desert." The Mistress' physical characteristics are:

PS: 12 MD: 18 AG: 20 MA: 8
PB: 21 EN: 10 FT: 14 WP: 11
PC: 6 APA: 11

Sun aspected, she can read, write, and speak Common at Rank 6 and speaks Bedonin at Rank 4. She is also a Rank 2 Merchant at Rank 6 Courtier. She is also a Dagger at Rank 3.

The mistress is Shynla, Xrak's daughter, who is being kidnapped by traitors and love potions. If spoken with, she will appear to be a girl with brief moments of lucidity. While under this influence of the potions, she is devoted to Alla and will fight rather than leave his side. Twenty-four hours after the last dosage she will regain her common sense and identity. She will become shocked at the state of her clothes and the amount of make-up she is wearing and may blame whoever is around a less calm dowry and acquainted with the fact. She will be very eager to rejoice her father, whom she thought dead. It would be inadvisable at this point to remind Shynla that, for the past year, she has been the sexual plaything of ama with a lot of imagination.

The party will not immediately recognize her from Xarak's description. If asked to describe the woman he is looking for, Xarak will describe the young woman as a fresh-faced young girl with medium-brown hair, primitive eyes, and a ready smile. She is now has been bleached and it Alla's command, overdoes her make-up and understands her clothing.

Korena, when last seen, had dark brown hair, with a good figure and a Physical Beauty of 19. She was in a late thirties when abducted; it is up to the GM to decide what she becomes of her.

4. DELIAN

The presence of Shynla is a major source of annoyance to Alla's wife, Delian. She is still quite beautiful but, in Alla's estimation, getting on in years (the 31st passed 25). Desperately in love with her husband, she is blind to the faults of his mistress. In the end, if he leaves her, but this all it has gone on longer than the previous one, and she is growing increasingly paranoid. Delian's physical characteristics are:

PS: 13 MD: 15 AG: 18 MA: 5
PB: 20 EN: 12 FT: 20 WP: 14
PC: 10 APA: 11

Sun aspected, she speaks Common and Bedonin at Rank 8 and is a Rank 7 Courtier. She is also Rank 4 with a dagger (which she is not at all hesitant to use), but in her session of Alla's mistress under his pillow.

Delian knows about when the mistress arrived, but she does not know her real name. Delian does remember how the girl looked at first and the fact her hair has been bleached. She also remembers at first the girl would put up a fight, but "Alla must have won her over."

If the dislike of the girl is pronounced, and she will be amenable to a plot to kidnap the girl, but will immediately report to Alla as anything she has to a plot to hurt him. By doing this, she feels she will prove her worth to Alla. Occasionally out of sheer loneliness, Delian takes a lover. If Alla hears of it, then mistress or Delian, he will kill the person responsible.

Delian believes what everyone believes about Garn, so the players will gain a new insight into her.

5. RORY

There are several helpful servants working in the camp at any one time. These helpful servants get characteristics and may be created if the GM needs them. The only exception is Rory.

Rory is Alla's personal servant and acts as major domo for the rest of the servants. He has served Alla for a number of years, hoping by providing excellent service that Alla may one day set him free. He lays out Alla's clothes after he has cleaned them, cooks all of Alla's personal meals, and keeps Alla's headquarters neat. Rory's physical characteristics are:

PS: 9 MD: 17 AG: 14 MA: 5
PB: 15 EN: 15 FT: 19 WP: 20
PC: 16 APA: 10

Rory has no special skills or talents, or does he have Rank with any weapons, as he was taken during a raid on a settlement of holdings and pressed into service. He does speak Common at Rank 8 and Bedonin at Rank 5, and is Moon-speaked.

Rory has been biding his time hoping to be released, but his become disillusioned. Because Rory knows ill the party's purpose is discovered he will be misled, he agreed to Xarak's deal or ally separately. To make sure no suspicious falls on him, Rory will not allow the party to use his food to poison Alla at night, while he will take to the party, he will not help them in the execution of their assignment.

Rory is most nervous since it is raining from dawn, it is his wonder if Xarak can hold the rains in Bedonin until the deed is done. Upon arriving back in camp, Rory will be seen pitifully on guard to escape when the party has killed Alla or under the cover of any disturbance. He will try to make sure of what happens so he can report to Xarak.

Rory knows when Shyria arrived, but does not know her name or how she is being kept. He did not associate the palm tree with the woman girl Xarak described. He knows of Delus's growing hatred for the girl and the general hopes it for around camp. He does not know about Ginn.

6. TALAN

When Alla realized he would need a constant supply of poison to keep Shyria interested, he decided he needed a skilled alchemist. Until then, he needed poisons only to limit his enemies at a distant slaves. He found Talan in a city to the northwest, gifted with a schemist. Talan was open to the proposal despite Alla's reputation, simply because he was and is too busy working on his magic and mixtures to care much about what goes on around him. If engaged in conversation, he will talk to them, but will become bored and cut short any conversation on other subjects. Once he begins talking about alchemy, he may (60%) in turn talk about the poisons he supplies for Alla's mistress. Talan's physical characteristics are:

PS: 9 MD: 12 AG: 13 MA: 23
PB: 12 EN: 12 FT: 16 WP: 21
PC: 10 APA: 10

Talan is also an Adept of the College of the Sorceries of the Mind as he has achieved the following Rank (Spell Code/Rank Achieved): T-1/3; T-2/5; T-3/4; G-1/2; G-2/2; G-3/8; G-7/9; Q-1/4. He can read, write, and speak Common at Rank 9 and speaks Bedonin at Rank 4. He is a Rank 8 Alchemist (specializing in poisons and medicines), Rank 3 Healer, and Rank 2 Astrologer. If Alla is uncertain before a raid, he will go to Talan to get a feeling of how the skirmish will go. He also possesses Rank 2 with a Dagger, but is certainly no fighter and would more than likely be obvious to a major invasion. He is Sun-speaked.

Talan provides a combination of potions: Control of Person, Bending Will, and love philtres of various descriptions. All these are provided for Alla's use. A more complete listing of the ingredients can be found in the description of his item in Chapter VII.

If asked about Alla's omens, he will relate how he has often gone to Alla suggesting they make a potion using this item, but Alla has twice refused.

7. THE BEDONINS

There are 45 to 50 men in the camp. They are pleased with their lot in life, but are waiting for Alla to raise to have a fantastic piece of jewelry sold so the proceeds may be divided. They are loyal to Alla and will follow him blindly. Average characteristics for the bedonins are:

PS: 21 MD: 18 AG: 15 MA: 7
PB: 12 EN: 16 FT: 24 WP: 15
PC: 10 APA: 11

All bedonins will have Rank 1 to 3 with Scimitar, Spear, and/or Bow. They speak Bedonin at Rank 8 in addition to their 20% chance for speaking Common at Rank 1 to 5. Among them, they will have some Bestial skills (Rank 1 to 5), Ranged skills (Rank 1 to 4), Thief and/or Spy skills (Rank 1 to 5). The mercenaries will have slightly higher characteristics and Rank 1 to 3 rest of their attributes.

The bedonins will wear no armor in camp except when on guard duty over the treasure or slaves or when going into battle. Even then they wear only their armor less their shirt roasting in the desert heat. Suggested encounters for the bedonins can be found in Chapter VII describing the camp.

If asked about the two women, there will be 12% chance the bedonins asked will remember Alla pulling a girl out of the slave pen, but will not be sure of what happened to her. If the bedonins are asked what happens to captured women in general, they will state most are sold as slaves to Ucalia. This is a 23% chance they will tell the characters Alla keeps a record of their transactions in with his maps and plans in his quarters. Given a detailed description of Shyria and Korena, there is an 18% chance they will be remembered as the girl who is now Alla's mistress and an older woman who may have been a close friend or relation.

8. THE SLAVES

The bandits have taken prisoners of their raid and are preparing to sell them at the market place.

If the party decides to try to gain information or assistance from the slaves, it should be noted while they have skills, their depleted condition and lack of sleep in these skills will make them ineffective very low. They know nothing about Korena and Shyria. If called upon to help with the situation, they will be too weak, this, and ineffective to make a difference.

If the party tries to enslave the slaves' help in a revolt, they will find no allies in the pen. If freed, the slaves will not break into a mad rush to get away from the camp (this will provide a diversion, if that is what the characters want).

VII. The Camp

9. BACKGROUND

At the end of each year's raids, the bedonins look forward to returning to the

oasis which they have made their safe haven. While at the oasis, they relax and celebrate. The highlight of this respite is always the entertainers Alla provides for his men.

The men will be eager and friendly with the entertainers, but they are hoping for an exciting evening. If a male is included in the party, word will rapidly spread through camp, bringing many bedonins to see how pretty they are. But male entertainers will also be welcomed, as the bedonins enjoy acrobats and jugglers.

The tribe's reaction to the entertainers will depend heavily on the type being presented. If the entertainers depend upon the spoken word (juggled singing, anecdotes, etc.), most of the tribe will not disturb and Common and will not be amused. Non-verbal forms (talent magic, acrobatics, juggling, dancing, etc.) may be judged separately by the GM based on the estimation of the act's effectiveness. If the entertainers are not sufficient, Alla will pay them off in the first night to see that they get back to town.

All entertainers, punishment, and prodigations are presented to the men in the open area in the center of the tent. At night, two large bonfires are maintained in this area as indicated.

10. ALLA'S TENT

The camp consists of 15 modular tents, each approximately 15 feet in diameter. Upon their arrival, the party will be escorted to the largest of these tents (T-1), where they will be greeted by Alla (accompanied by his mistress), her lieutenants, Delus, and Ginn. This meeting will be held in section C of the tent, where Alla can do all his professional business. Section A is where Alla's mistress sleeps, and he spends most of his nights there. Delus sleeps in section B, dreaming of the day when Alla tires of the young girl.

Alla's tent is strewed with large pillows and cushions, which are used as chairs. Two short tables are in the tent, set with bowls of fruits or other delicacies in the manner of a buffet. Hanging from the ceiling are the tent area. In section A, there is a medium chest containing Alla's maps of the desert, plans for future raids, and records of the tribe's transactions.

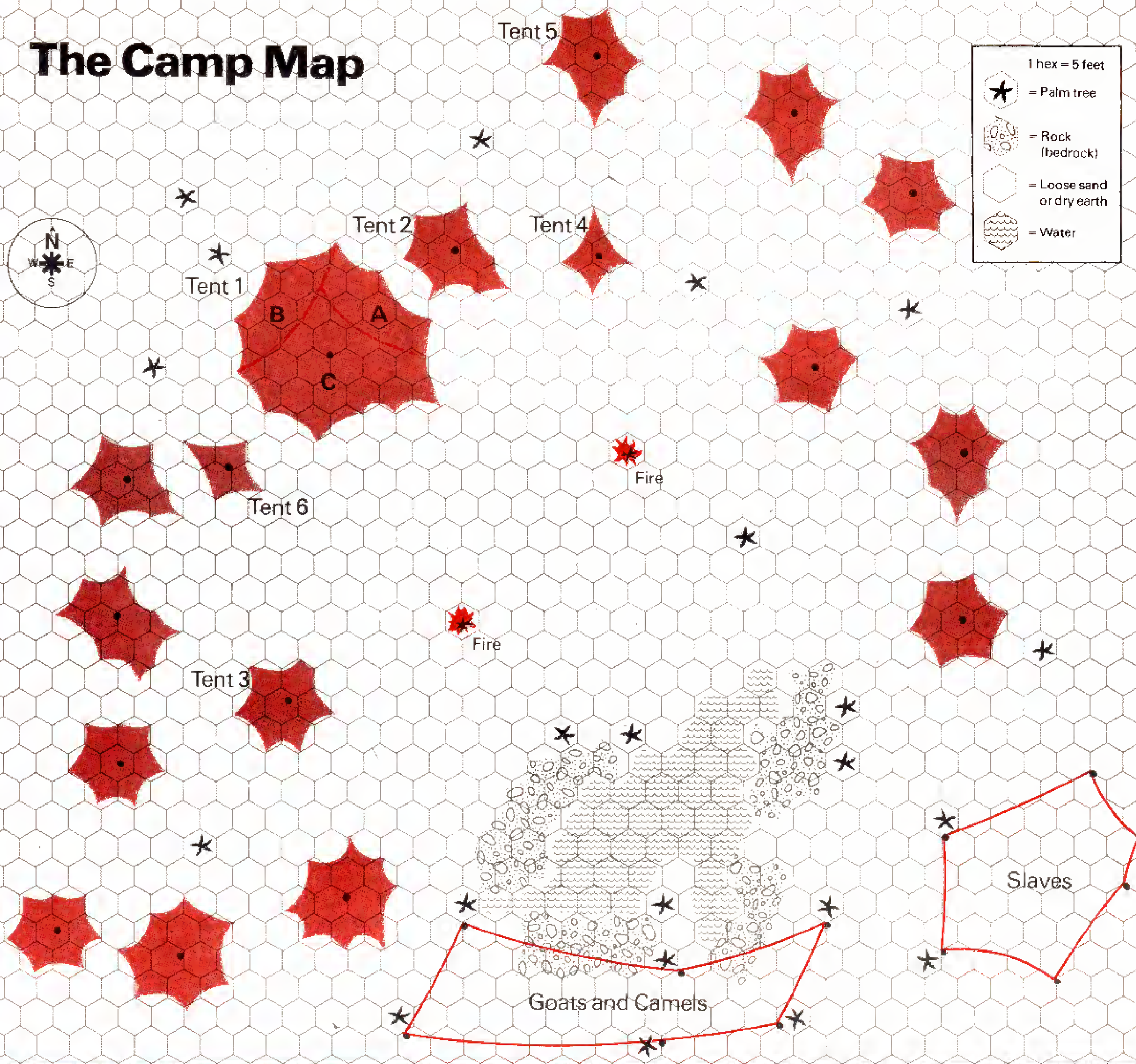
11. GARN'S TENT

Next to Alla's tent is Ginn's quarters (T-12), which he occupies alone. The two tents appear to be separate, but there are concealed slits in both tents allowing access to one from the other. Ginn and Alla often meet late at night to discuss strategy and the state of the camp. Alla makes sure the mistress is asleep by singing poetry.

Garn's tent is rather spartan compared with the rest of the camp. Garn owns a war club, whip, gilded scimitar, and bolo. Garn is very alert to strange sounds coming from Alla's tent, and the slightest suspicion will bring him padding silently through the slits to investigate after grabbing his whip and scimitar.

If Garn happens upon intruders in Alla's quarters, he will first attack with the whip, then with the scimitar. If there is more than one intruder, Garn will use his spells to confuse them and then attack.

The Camp Map



The Overland Map



12. THE TREASURE TENT

The tent (Tent 3) near Alla's will be the tribe's treasure, consisting of four small chests containing 513 Tunesilver Galleons, all of Alla's personal treasure chests with 279 Tunesilver Galleons. This tent is guarded around the clock, so the two guards outside the tent have a clear view of the front of Alla's tent, so they may also watch for any late night visitors. Inside the tent is as this guard. He is an added precaution to watch a piece of jewelry the tribe has acquired, a medallion with a diamond set in it worth about 200 Gold Shillings. All guards on duty will wear leather armor under their robes.

Any attempt to overpower these guards will result in shouts which will rouse the rest of the camp and bring the unchecked wrath of 45 bedouins down on the heads of the party. If captured, the party will sit best be shown naked in the desert without food or water after having been blindfolded. As worst, they will be publicly flogged and hung out to dry in the desert sun. If males may be thrown to the men and the tortured.

13. THE BEDOUINS' TENTS

The tenting bits are similar in design. Each is decorated in reds and blacks with very little hard linings. They are supported by a single pole in the center which is embedded in the sand like sand around the oasis is firmer than in the surrounding desert. It would take a combined Physical Strength of 30 or more to knock the post over and bring down the tent. In addition, these poles will take 25 Damage Points before splitting. Each tent has its own hanging lamp and a few bottles filled with water. Other bottles are hung at various points about the camp.

The bedouins share these tents. Any males in the party will be placed in tents where there is room. Females will be placed in the smallest tent (Tent 14), unless they are invited to stay in the quarters of Alla.

Since the desert does not require the specific placing of a character other than the major NPC's, the GM should use his discretion in determining the results of any investigation of the tribe's tents by the party. See suggestions are...

...The occupants of this tent are a particularly busy frame of mind and a trifle impatient for the women Alla will send him.

...These bedouins are more anxious than the others, and have managed to hoard a small cache of gems (worth 500 Silver Pennies) which they have hidden in one of their pillows.

...These men are being kept under guard, as they have stolen from the private order of Alla. They are scheduled to die at a combination flogging and beheading.

...These bedouins are very opinionated in their Silver Pennies. One of them speaks Common well enough to invite the characters to join.

...This tent is the quarters for Alla's lieutenants. They all speak Common to one degree or another and will talk of past raids and great treasures and of their allegiance to Alla. They are very respectful when speaking to Delia, and one of them may be carrying a torch for her or, indeed, may be her current lover.

...These men see it as a disgraceful wrestling match in the camp. All male characters will be invited to join in and test their merits. The GM should make one of the bedouins a very strong flogger who challenges all who enter the camp.

...One of the occupants of this tent is a pet dog of his time keeping a line edge on his scimitar and bolo skills. He is probably very mean and will challenge any and all to test their skills against him.

These encounters are suggested to challenge the players' survival instincts and keep the discovery of Xarak's daughter from becoming too simple a task. These suggestions may be applied to groups or individuals as the GM sees fit.

14. TALAN'S TENT

The northernmost tent (Tent 5) is Talan's workshop and sleeping quarters. He spends most of his time there (a 90% chance he will be perfecting his art and position). Occasionally, when Talan makes a mistake, a flat explosion can be heard reverberating throughout the camp. Usually Talan has managed to escape injury, so he bristles himself off, exclaiming any smoldering embers or his clothes, shrugs his shoulders, and returns to work.

A search of Talan's workshop will reveal a wide variety of ingredients for poisons. The inventory would include bloodroot, cyclamen, ginseng, marmarash, belladonna, caper, coriander, eunhuus, jimson weed, sandalwood, etc. Talan's room is severely depleted during the past raiding season. He gave Rory a shopping list of herbs and equipment to get for him when Rory went into town. He is very anxious for his return, and there is a 75% chance that Talan will be the first person to greet the party when they arrive in camp. He is not seen very often, however, making a delivery sometime after dinner to Alla's tent.

15. THE SERVANTS' TENTS

The halfing servant's bed down where there happens to be room. Rory, though, stays in the second small tent near Alla's, as he must be ready to answer his master's summons. Rory's tent (Tent 6) is very sparse; it has a bedroll and a few changes of clothing, but no personal possessions.

Since it is in the camp, however, Rory has been making food for his tent (couscous of rice, dried meat, some fruit) as he is preparing to leave when he and the party kill Alla. If the party manages to sneak up to Rory's tent at night, there is a 20% chance they will find him preparing a small traveling bag. Rory is not overly brave, and he will talk all when threatened with painful death.

16. OUTSIDE AREAS

On the far side of the oasis, probably downwind from the rest of the camp, are kept the goats, sheep, camels, and slaves.

Two guards watch over the slaves, but they are not worried about a possible escape, as the slaves are too weak and are chained together. The guard has the key. The chains are anchored to posts which are set in the sand.

The slaves are docile and not easily scared. The slaves are recruited, but it is scored beasts requiring much prodding to move. As a hatcher with a Bewitchment skill of Rank 2 specializing in Great Laid Men, the slaves will have little problem getting them moving; for all others, the proposition is a bit more difficult.

During the time the tribe is in the oasis, they will be using comparatively well.

The main drink at the camp is water with goat's milk served as an occasional change. Usually the goat's milk is fermented down so it is a little like a beer. The milk know Alla has some good wine stored in it, but they are not allowed to touch the milk, as they are reserved for his special guests.

17. RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

This camp is a bustling place during the day, remain a fairly busy through the night, and quiet down after the tent is put to light. It will be busy during daylight that wandering characters would come into someone's, and this is reflected in the Frequency of Chance Encounters given in the Camp Danger Table. Not every encounter will prove dangerous (a reaction roll should be made if a possible meeting with a NPC and bedouin), but the possibility of running into someone (or something) is rather high.

Thus, while the characters are in the camp, a roll must be made at the appropriate intervals at the end of the percentile rolled in less than or equal to the Chance of Encounter listed, as additional rolls must be made on the Camp Encounter Table to see who or what was encountered.

In addition, an Overland Encounter Table is provided. This is for use once the party has reached the desert, with the quantities and time intervals explained. Until the party has arrived at the desert, the encounter is (if the GM determines) should be determined as per the *DragonQuest* rules. There are two encounters on the desert table which are not covered in the table as they are in the Sandstorm and the Sand Golem.

Sandstorms come up suddenly and last for 10+5 hours, with winds reaching 30 mph. Characters caught in such a storm should find shelter immediately. If they lie upon something, they will lose one point of Fatigue (Endurance when Fatigue is lost) for each hour in the storm. There is a 90% chance that a party walking through a sandstorm will head off in a random direction unless there is a Ranger specializing in Waza among them.

The most fearsome danger facing the party is the legendary Sand Golem.

Sand Golem
RETURN HASSET Desert
Rarity: Vary Rare NUMBER 1 (Unique)
DESCRIPTION Sand Golems are humanoid in shape and composed entirely of sand, with eyes of gleaming obsidian. They stand to 15 feet tall. A small amount of sand continuously falls from their body like water off a man emerging from a hose.

TALENTS SKILLS AND MAGIC Sand Golems can swim through sand as humans move through water. When a Sand Golem is in its state, only its black eyes can be seen, but they are often mistaken for ordinary stones. Sand

Golems have no magical abilities or skills. They can be harmed by any weapons except Class C, which do no damage. Because the Golem is composed of shifting sands, its structure gives it an effective natural armor.

MOVEMENT RATE: Running: 300

Sandstorming: 200

PS: 21-30 **MD:** 0 **AG:** 10-14 **MA:** 0

PE: 6-10 **EN:** 13-17 **FI:** 21-24 **WP:** 10-12

PC: 6-10 **EA:** 10-11

NA: 4 DP due to composition

WEAPONS: Sand Golems are no weapons. They can attack with both fists without penalty at a base Chance of 35%, doing D+2 damage. When the Golem is in sand on sand, it can extend its arm to attack into an area two hexes beyond its own.

COMMENTS: No one is sure why the Sand Golems came from; perhaps they resulted from a failed experiment by an Adept of Shaping Magic. They are very aggressive and will attack in party of up to seven beings. A Sand Golem's life is known to depend upon its keeping contact with the sand, so that is how it replenishes itself. The Sand Golem must be in contact with a large area of sand to extend its arm in attack. Kariy does not Sand Golem travel out of the desert, as when it loses contact with sand it loses out Endurance point per moment it rumbles. Damage done to a Sand Golem when it is not in contact with sand is not absorbed by the creature's NA.

IX. Assassination

Should the party attempt to murder Alla in his sleep, it will be necessary for them to steal into his sleeping chamber. During playtesting, some inconsistencies presented themselves involving such actions. We suggest that, if the party fails their stealth roll, another roll be made based on 3xAlla's Perception to awaken him.

Should a character manage to creep upon a sleeping Alla, then Alla should get a roll based on 4xhis Perception. In either case, the Tactical Single begins when Alla has awakened. If he does not wake up, the party should have no difficulty in simply cutting his throat, so long as Alla is alone. If Alla is sleeping with someone, they should get similar Perception rolls. Even the slightest outword noise, however, will bring Gann to investigate.

X. Final Notes

The *Camp of Alla-Akabar* is intended to be as complete as possible to save the GM unnecessary labor. Naturally, the GM will have to use discretion and imagination at certain points, as everything the players might wish to know could not have been covered. The NPC's have been given fairly complex backgrounds in order for the GM to incorporate them into his own campaign beyond its completion of this adventure.

It is also suggested that the GM make some minor alterations in the maps and encounter descriptions to prevent players who have been copies of the adventure from becoming too overconfident. This situation

should be treated as a guide for the GM, not as a rigid and restrictive scenario.

In playtesting, Gann always managed to survive since most players were so inclined to find him a far more dangerous adversary than they expected that they would quickly flee after physically confronting him. This proved interesting in that it is a ploy for Gann sometimes would find his way to a city where those characters happened to reside. Upon meeting Gann, the characters expected to have to fight him, feeling sure he was there to exact revenge. On the contrary, he eloquently thanked them for killing off a man who had grown far too soft and weak to be useful. Alla's death had allowed Gann to take control of the band, and he and the bedouins were much the happier for it. Gann's indifference proved most efficient (since he wasn't spending all his time in bed with a mistress) and everyone's wealth rose dramatically.

It should be pointed out that the relationship between Alla and Gann should be well considered by the GM before the adventure begins, as any hesitation on Gann's part to come to the aid of Alla would swing the advantage heavily in the party's favor in terms of accomplishing the assassination. Most players reaction to the adventure indicated that this adventure, more than most, required accurate acting by the GM of the NPC's since most of the information the players will be able to obtain will come through conversation with those individuals.

Finally, the intent of this design was that the camp and the whole adventure should have an air of mystery associated with Arabian intrigue. The GM should strive to emphasize this feeling, and some have gone so far as to play the soundtrack to *Lawrence of Arabia* or Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* during play, both of which helped set the right mood.

THE CAMP OF ALLA-AKABAR DESIGN CREDITS

Design/Co-Development

Garry King

Physical Systems and Graphics

Randmond A. Stromgren

Development/Co-Design

Robert Kinn

Adventure Writing and Advice

Stephen Gray, Richard Pinnick, Larry

D'Ambrosio, Ed Fawcett, Gindy Blotow

Production

Ted Koller, Manfred F. Mitkahn,

Michael E. Moore, Bob Ryan, Kim Sini

Camp Danger Table

TIME	FREQUENCY	CHANCE OF ENCOUNTER
Daytime	every ¼ hour	95%
Evening	every ½ hour	75%
Night	every ¾ hour	50%

Overland Encounter Table

Before this party reaches its desert, the GM should determine any random encounters using the Encounter Tables in *DragonQuest*. Once this desert is reached, use the following table. Check every 12 hours, with a 20% encounter chance.

01-10	D+3 Dingoes
11-20	D Buzzards
21-35	+6 Scorpions
36-50	+2 Tarantulas
51-60	D+2 Crows
61-75	D+2 Humans (with 1 camel)
76-95	Sandstorm
96-00	Sand Golem

CAMP ENCOUNTER TABLE

TIME	DAYTIME	EVENING	NIGHT
01-20	Gann	Gann	Gann and Alla
21-30	Rory	Rory	Rory
31-36	Talin	Rory and Alla	Talin
37-37	Shylin	Shylin	D Scorpions
38-40	Alla	Alla	D+2 Tarantulas
41-45	Delan	Delan	Gann
46-50	D-8 Servants	D-7 Servants	D-8 Servants
51-65	D Bedouins	D+2 Bedouins	D-5 Bedouins
66-75	D-3 Bedouins	D Bedouins	D-7 Bedouins
76-95	D-7 Bedouins	D-3 Bedouins	D-8 Bedouins
96	Scorpion	Talin	Shylin
97	Asp	Alla	Delan
98	Tarantula	D-2 Scorpions	Alla
99	Black Widow Spider	D-5 Tarantulas	Asp
00	Escaped Slave	Asp	Escaped Slave

Being: A number of the given persons or beings appears equal to a roll on D10 modified by the number given. Modified rolls of zero or less are treated as 1.

DragonNotes

A Regular Feature For DragonQuest Players

By Gerry Klug

With this issue of *Ares*, I take over the writing and responsibility for *DragonNotes*. The great advantages of being able to write a bi-monthly column is that I can communicate with the *DragonQuest* playing public directly and offer help, suggestions, information, and guidance for all you hardy souls who play what I consider to be the number one FRP game on this market.

First, let me introduce myself. By the time you read this, some of you will have seen my name mentioned in the credits for *Universe* elsewhere in this issue you will find an article on that game by me and realize I am involved in science fiction role-playing. But *DragonQuest* players will not know why I came to mention this column and take over this spiritual guidance of the *DragonQuest* line of products.

Being a role-player for five years prior to beginning work for SPI, I played many games including *DBD*, *AD&D*, *The Fantasy Trip*, *Traveller*, *En Garde*, *Gamma World*, *Runesquest* and *Boot Hill*. My emphasis has always been in fantasy role-playing, however, and I was in this process of attempting to design my own game when SPI released *DragonQuest*. Rapidly I discovered *DQ* was the best game available and thought SPI might need freelance adventure designs. I offered to do one and they accepted my offer. You will find the results of that assignment in this issue, titled *The Camp of Ala Akaber*. The relationship was cordial and mutually agreeable, so they affirmed me a staff position to work on the new SPI science fiction role-playing game, *Universe*.

After a while it became obvious it was the person most familiar with *DragonQuest* (being the only person here who actually played it regularly) and I was then assigned to write this column. I enjoy *DragonQuest* immensely, playing the game twice a week. I GM a campaign which has existed since September of last year, and play characters in a friend's campaign which was started last August. Hopefully my experience with the game and the information I have garnered since working for SPI will aid us all in enjoying the game even more than we do now.

Recently I attended Michigan, a convention sponsored by Metro Detroit Gamers in Rochester, Michigan. This was my first opportunity to communicate directly with loyal *DragonQuest* players and their role-players in general, and also their first chance to let me know their feelings about the game. The message to me was loud and clear: give me more support material (adventures, supplements, etc.) and re-design the original cumbersome combat system. On both counts we are proceeding rapidly.

As this column is being written, I am in the midst of a redesign of the combat system, which will replace the old one by the third printing of *DragonQuest* and should be ready some time this fall. Reaction to the combat system has been good and blind test

copies are going out shortly. The third printing means a few very good things: 1) *DragonQuest* has sold about 15,000 copies in one year and sales continue to rise, 2) it will probably appear in the stores in a new form, as hard bound book, 3) massive addenda changes will be incorporated into this new printing. All this became possible because the popularity of the game continues to grow, and I feel very strongly this is because of the enthusiasm the regular *DQ* players are communicating to the "unbelievers." Keep up this good work!

Among the upcoming supplements and adventures are Steve Jackson's *World Generation* and Paul Jaquays's *Enchanted Wood*, both due out in the fall. Since they have been described in this column before, I won't talk about them again, save to say they are both tremendous designs. Also, we are actively soliciting freelance adventure designs and are continuing the design work for *Aluska* follow-ups as well as boxed city, boxed world, and the *DragonQuest II* projects.

I feel this column should be a way of disseminating additional rules material to *DragonQuest* players. Although the rules are certainly not exotic free, most GM's I talked to found their own answers to rules questions within the books which already exist. What concerned them most was additional material and rules not covered in the original game which they felt was desperately needed. In partial answer to their request, below is another adventure skill, **Horsemanship**. This skill is treated in all respects as **Stealth**, and will appear in a slightly revised form, thanks to the combat system changes in the next printing of *DragonQuest*.

[834] An adventurer will use horsemanship to direct animals which he rides.

An adventurer may use his horsemanship with any animal or monster which he would ordinarily ride (such as horses, donkeys, camels, elephants, etc.). Enchanted or fantastical monsters do not necessarily fall into this category, and the GM must make rulings governing these situations.

The character's player will roll percentile dice whenever his horsemanship is called into play. A character's horsemanship is equal to (Adjusted Agility + Willpower) / 2 + (Rank x 8). In this equation, round all fractions down. The type of mount a character is riding will modify his horsemanship as follows:

Donkey	-10
Mustang	-12*
Quarterhorse	0
Die Wolf	-10
Draft Horse	-5
Palfray	+15
Warhorse	-6*
Camel	-15

Mule	-8
Pony	+10
Elephant	-10

An * indicates a negative modifier unless animal is trained by the rider; in that case, the modifiers 0.

The GM should also take into account the familiarity the character has with the individual animal types and apply modifiers thereto. In g., the first time a character finds himself atop a camel should be worth at least an additional -15.

A character's horsemanship is called into play whenever he wishes his mount to perform an unusual or difficult action. Also, in every Pulse in combat a horseman's skill must be made. Any mount can be directed into moving at a walking pace or even a brisk trot; an unusual or difficult action would be to break into a gallop (or charge), turn sharply around, come to a halt once goaded into a gallop or charge, jump an obstacle, etc. During combat, horsemanship is called into play during every pulse to: a) keep the mount controlled, b) regain control if it is lost, and c) direct the mount to take any specific Action, whether Maneuver or Martial. Remember, only a Warhorse can be directed to enter into Close Combat by its rider, and all other mounts will attack only if directly assaulted.

A successful roll (equal to or less than the modified percentage) will result in the mount obeying the directions of the rider. A roll above this modified percentage but less than the modified percentage + the rider's Willpower indicates the mount either does nothing or continues to do whatever it was doing. A roll above both of these indicates the mount will either disobey the rider, buck, stamp to throw the rider, or some other unpleasant result. The actual occurrence must be decided by the GM and should become worse the further the roll is above the modified percentage.

If the GM judges the rider has totally lost control of his mount, the rider may take no other action until he has regained control (presuming he managed to stay mounted).

Using horsemanship costs no Action Points while in combat unless no other Action is taken that Pulse, in which case use constitutes a Pass Action. A trained horseman receives certain abilities as he rises in Rank.

Rank 3: Pays normal Action Point cost for Martial actions.

Rank 5: May use weapons of 2 readiness points.

Rank 7: May use two weapons at once.

Horsemanship has a maximum Rank of 10 and an Experience Multiple of 125. Every adventurer has it at Rank 0 when beginning play. Rising in Rank is accomplished as **Stealth** (see 7.6, paragraph 2).

When I read the rules for *DragonQuest* for the first time, I was astounded that page 201

(continued on page 201)

DeltaVee Enhanced

by Justin Leites

Tactical space combat games which use a relatively realistic game system tend to be exceedingly deadly. Even when one side has a large advantage, there will still be heavy casualties in any battle. For this reason, when re-players in SPI's online fiction role-playing game, *Universa*, will largely prefer to avoid combat as much as possible. The tactical combat rules as embodied in *DeltaVee* and the way the scenarios have been set up favor maneuver over actual combat. Meet the scenarios in *DeltaVee* as escape maneuvers, for logical reasons within a role-playing universe.

In an offensive combat, laser and particle beam weapons are intended to damage individual pods while a missile may be able to destroy an entire ship. There is no sunn'thing as a defensive posture in space combat; both sides are going for victory at any expense.

When one considers that in a role-playing game the whole idea is to keep a character alive and growing through adventures, a head-to-head confrontation will probably see some, if not all, the characters killed. While on a planetary expedition a character may be able to escape through his use of skills or quick wit, in a space combat these abilities will be of limited advantage. Furthermore, the costs involved in building and owning a ship, particularly a merchant ship, may make any combat prohibitively expensive. Though the costs of building a ship is not as expensive in *Universa* as in *Traveller*, it will take a long period of adventuring to replace any lost ship.

Thus, the scenarios for *DeltaVee* were designed to keep the characters and their ships in existence for further adventures. In addition to escape, another popular maneuver is threaten-and-board, in which a more heavily armed ship can threaten a weaker ship. Once more, the character interaction takes place in an environment (inside a ship) where the characters' skills and wits can best be utilized. It is not unusual in the game to have a merchant ship yield a rich cargo simply under the threat of combat, an exceptionally cost-efficient method of gaining wealth.

The *DeltaVee* scenarios played down combat in favor of escape. The most important lesson to be gleaned was that a player should never exceed the maneuver rating of a ship with the velocity rating. A ship that can no longer weave is an easy target for missiles. A player who maneuvers a ship properly should be able to escape with only minor damage about fifty percent of the time.

For players who are more interested in testing *DeltaVee* as a tactical combat system, the following scenarios offer a chance to explore the tactics of such an approach. These scenarios will give players a better, albeit bloodier, feeling of ship-to-ship combat.

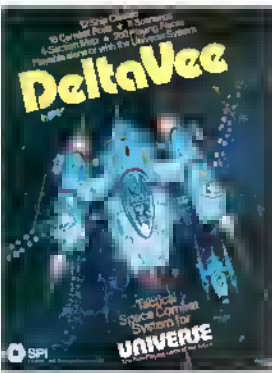
SCENARIO 6: Battle for B'Mall

B'Mall, a small, mineral rich planet on the periphery of the Federation, has decided to break all its ties with the central government. Namely, the Federation would let the peripheral planets have a certain amount of autonomy, but B'Mall has large quantities of rare minerals the Federation requires. Thus, a punitive action is begun to bring B'Mall back in line.

Map Deployment:

A	B	C
---	---	---

Note: B'Mall is positioned in hex 0707 on Map A.



Player 1 (B'Mall) Deployment:

The B'Mall player has 100,000 Trans with which to purchase his fleet (the nonexistent plutonium is a rather shady — i.e., piratical — trade conglomeration in exchange for the ships). Expenditures for the ships and pods are listed in the accompanying Cost and Pod Cost Chart (left). Ever Trans are lost, no part expenditures may be made. Ships are set up in hex 0707 of Map A using any facing and with a velocity of 1.

Player 2 (Federation) Deployment:

One *Spear* (spaceship counter AI with two arsenal pods, one battle communications pod, one tractor pod, one crew pod, and one energy pod. Two *Swords* (meant to B and

C), each with two heavy weapons pods, one battle communications pod, one battlecraft pod, (with a *Terwilliker-XI* and an energy pod. All ships begin in hex 0107 of Map C facing any direction and with a velocity of 7.

Victory Conditions:

The B'Mall player must destroy two of the Federation ships or he loses. Also, in order to win he must keep all Federation ships from landing on the planet. The Federation player wins if he lands any ship on the planet.

SCENARIO 7: Battle of Tau-Keti

Not long after the Federation took control of Tau-Keti, the Federation scouts encountered an alien patrol ship. Though communications were attempted, the aliens proved hostile, firing on the scouts who barely were able to escape safely into hyperspace. Now the aliens are sending a fleet into human space. For the first time, two cultures will meet in combat to determine the fate of two expanding hegemonies.

Map Deployment:

A	B	C
---	---	---

Player 1 (Alien) Deployment:

The Alien player gets 14 ships equivalent to the *Terwilliker-XI*. These ships never expend Energy Units though they are considered to carry the normal number of units as indicated on the Spaceship Attribute Chart, 4.81 unless they receive damage to their engines. The ships then suffer all penalties for sun damage to their engines. All ships are deployed within two hexes of 0707 on Map A facing in any direction and with a velocity from 1 to 6. (**Note:** Players may wish to experiment with other alien vessels as outlined in the accompanying module.)

Player 2 (Federation) Deployment:

Three *Swords* (spaceship counters A, B and C) each with one arsenal pod, one heavy weapons pod, one battle communications pod, one energy pod, and one tractor beam pod. All ships start within 1 hex of 0707 on Map C with any facing and an initial velocity from 2 to 5.

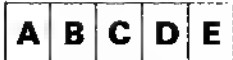
Victory Conditions:

The first player to destroy more than 50% of the other player's ships automatically becomes the winner.

SCENARIO 4: The Bomb

The terrorist organization, *Basque Revista*, has secretly manufactured a hydrogen bomb in the prison colony on Ganymede and has commandeered one transfer and one guard ship to transport the bomb to earth. They threaten to destroy the Federation headquarters unless their demands are met. Inside sources on Ganymede were able to alert the Federation in time, and now a hastily assembled fleet is being sent out to intercept the terrorists and save earth.

Map Deployment



Note: Earth is in hex 0707 on Map E

Player 1 (Terrorist) Deployment:

One *Corco Gamma* spaceship counter A1 with three battlecraft pods (with a *Tarwickler-X* battlecraft) and one *Piccolo* counter B1 with one buffered cargo pod. The ships are deployed facing in any direction in hex 0808 on Map A with a velocity of 3.

Player 2 (Federation) Deployment:

Two *Daggers* (spaceship counters A and B) with a heavy weapon pod and a crew pod each. On each turn after the Terrorists have fired their first shot (either particle, laser, or missile, but not a shot from the battlecraft), the Federation player rolls a 10-sided die twice. On each roll of 1, another *Dagger* counters may have to be created; appears on hex 0707 at map E (earth) with any facing and a velocity of 0. Each new *Dagger* contains an arsenal pod and an energy pod. (Note: Players will have to move Map A to the position of Map E when all ships have left Map A.)

Victory Conditions:

The Federation player must destroy the cargo pod on the *Piccolo* before the ship enters

into earth's orbit. The Terrorist player wins if the *Piccolo* enters earth's hex with the cargo pod intact (he does not have to land the ship in order to win).

SCENARIO 5: Firepower

Possely, a large military contractor, has built a ship they claim can beat any other ship ever made. The Federation authorities, dubious at best, offer the claim, offer Possely the chance to prove this boast by pitting down the continually rebellious citizens of Hek-Kaju 4.

(continued on page 33)

CRAFT AND PODS COST CHART

SHIP TYPE	COST (IN TERACONS)
Tarwickler-5000	9,100
Tarwickler-X	8,500
Dagger	12,200
Sword	22,100
Spaga	27,900
Piccolo	5,400
Flux	20,700
Clamnet	18,100
Corco Gamma	8,700
Corco Zeta	6,400
Corco Iota	17,500
Corco Mu	18,500
Corco Omega	1,000
PODS	
Arsenal	5,000
Battlecraft (pod only)	500
Communications	3,000
Energy	250
Heavy Weapon	3,000
Hunter	2,000
Light Weapon	1,700
Jump	1,500
Trocer Beam	2,500
Crew	100

HEAVY CRUISER AND TRANSPORT

The two ships covered in this section were the ultimate products of the Federation's weaponry. The Military Transport could carry one entire fleet, and the Heavy Cruiser was an entire fleet's worth of weaponry. As the Federation's territory expanded and potential hot spots developed, nine Cruisers were finally commissioned. For over three hundred years these Cruisers, accompanied by the Transports with their complement of *Swords* to act as scouts, preserved peace throughout the Federation space.

No scenarios have been included for these ships, since they proved to be all but invincible in combat (when used properly). Players are encouraged to create their own scenarios if they wish to test the limits of these space dreadnoughts. Players should use the Hit Table at lower left when using these ships in battle in addition to the Heavy Cruiser Hit Table and Missile Hit Chart in this section.

Each Heavy Cruiser has four independent forcefields, which should be numbered on the Spaceship Log. Whenever a forcefield is hit as indicated on the

ALIEN ENCOUNTERS

The scenarios included in *DeltaVee* (and in this article) take place in human occupied space. No alien races have yet been discovered, though such an encounter is inevitable as exploration ships continue to chart unknown stellar systems. Players who wish to experiment with possible alien spaceships in combat may create scenarios using the ships described in this module.

Rem Jet

The alien culture which designed this ship has not yet achieved hyperjump ability for interstellar travel. Existing within a closely packed stellar cluster, they have instead developed travel by rem jet, which (takes much more time for transit from one system to the next). The remjet uses a vast electronic grid to trap the hydrogen atoms that exist in the interstellar medium. The hydrogen is either stored for later interplanetary travel or burned directly by fusion in the massive remjets.

This alien vessel does not use pods. To interpret how damage applies from the Hit Table, use the following modifications: 1) if a result is rolled for a bridge, engine or forcefield hit, it is considered a half hit and treated like a bridge hit on normal ships; 2) if a result is rolled for a hit on Pods 1-5, it is considered a grid hit and is treated like an engine hit on a normal ship; 3) if any other Pod number is rolled, it is considered a miss and there is no damage involved (the human player

HIT TABLE

PODS	SECOND DIE	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
1	Critical					
2	Bridge	Engine	Bridge	Engine		
3	Forcefield	Pod 8	Pod 16	Pod 24	Pod 32	
4	Pod 1	Pod 9	Pod 17	Pod 25	Pod 33	
5	Pod 2	Pod 10	Pod 18	Pod 26	Pod 34	
6	Pod 3	Pod 11	Pod 19	Pod 27	Pod 35	
7	Pod 4	Pod 12	Pod 20	Pod 28	Pod 36	
8	Pod 5	Pod 13	Pod 21	Pod 29	Pod 37	
9	Pod 6	Pod 14	Pod 22	Pod 30	Pod 38	
10	Pod 7	Pod 15	Pod 23	Pod 31	Pod 39	

When a ship is hit, roll a 10-sided die to determine which row of the Hit Table to use. Roll the die again and cross-reference the second die result with the first number rolled to find where the ship was hit. If a ship does not have sufficient pods to match the number rolled, roll the second die again until one of the pods on the ship is hit. — No effect.

Note: Players may wish to substitute this Hit Table in place of the table that appears in *DeltaVee*.

Hit Table, roll a 10-sided die to determine which forcefield is affected on the Heavy Cruiser Forcefield Table. If one or more forcefields is destroyed on a Heavy Cruiser and a missile subsequently hits the ship, refer to the Missile Hit Chart to determine which pods are destroyed. In addition, the player must spend three additional hits over the Heavy Cruiser III per 9.8, using the accompanying Hit Table.

MISSILE HIT CHART

- #1 Destroys Engines, Bridge, and Pods 1-10.
#2 Destroys Pods 11-20.
#3 Destroys Pods 21-30.
#4 Destroys Pods 31-40.

If a missile hits a Heavy Cruiser, each area not protected by an intact forcefield is destroyed. Example: If Forcefield #2 is destroyed, a missile hit would destroy Pods 11-20, though the other forcefields would not suffer immediate destruction. However, the player must also roll for three additional hits on the Hit Table, as per 9.8 of the *DeltaVee* rules.

HEAVY CRUISER FORCEFIELD HIT TABLE

HIT	FORCEFIELD HIT
1	1
2	1
3	1
4	2
5	2
6	3
7	3
8	4
9	4
10	Roll twice (circulatory hit)

When a forcefield is hit on the Hit Table, roll a 10-sided die. The number indicates which of the four forcefields was affected. If a 10 is rolled, then massive circulatory damage has occurred; roll the die twice more to determine the two forcefields affected. If a number 10 is rolled during this process, two more forcefields are affected. It is possible for a multitude of forcefields to be affected by this process.

CRUISER/TRANSPORT ATTRIBUTE CHART

ATTRIBUTES	HEAVY CRUISER		MILITARY TRANSPORT	
	Classified	Unclassified	Classified	Unclassified
Cost				
Number of Pods	39	39		
Velocity Rating	1	1		
Maneuver Rating	3	2		
Energy Capacity	298	264		
Energy Burn Rate	24	24		
Streamlined	No	No		
Burner Class	2	1		
Armor Class	2	1		
Forcefield Class	2	1		
Civ Level	8	7		
Target Program	-6	-4		
Number of Forcefields	4	1		
Storage Pod Ability*	Yes	Yes		

*A Storage Pod takes up four pods worth of space on a ship. It can store any other military ship (except another Heavy Cruiser or Transport Vehicle), which may be launched following the same procedure as launching a fighter. □□

does not roll the die a second time as indicated in the instruction for the Hit Table).

Other specifications for the alien ram jet are given in the accompanying chart. (Note: The ram jet has one forcefield.)

Solarship

Another slow interstellar form of travel, this alien ship uses a large, thin, reflective sail to gather the light from a star to propel it through space. It too is used primarily by alien cultures in tightly packed stellar clusters. Since travel is so slow, taking hundreds of years per transit, these cultures rely heavily on robots to handle the craft during their long trips. Only one such ship has ever entered human occupied space; the guiding robots immediately opened fire on the scout ship, forcing the crew to return fire. The ship was destroyed and its point of origin never properly established.

In combat the solarship has damage applied to it using the modifications as specified for the ram jet. Other specifications are listed in the accompanying chart.

Modular Ship

These alien vessels are really a number of individual pods which are loosely connected and which can act independently in battle the pods break apart and act like individual ships, or they can keep bunched together as the alien commander wishes. Due to the mind link technique developed by this species, the individual

pods are able to attack as one; however, they are disadvantaged in that if one pod leader is hurt, the others also share his distress and ship's damage.

Each ship is made up of a variable number of pods. To interpret how damage applies from the Hit Table, use the following modifications: 1) if a result is rolled for a bridge, engine, or forcefield hit, it is considered a miss; and there is no effect; 2) if a result is rolled for a hit on any of the Pods of the ship, then all the Pods will suffer the same damage (thus, if the ship were composed of 4 Pods, then each Pod would take the same damage if the human player rolls a 1, 2, 3 or 4); if any other Pod number above the number actually composing the ship is rolled, it is considered a miss and no damage is taken (the human player does not roll the die a second time).

Each pod has the same specifications as indicated in the accompanying chart.

Pulsar

The alien culture which developed this ship has never established communications with humans. Though several of these ships have been sighted, none has ever been caught or studied thoroughly. These ships have been called the "ghosts" and "Flying Dutchmen" by humans, the few readings gathered by pilots seem to indicate that these ships are pure energy. Standing Federation Orders state that no ship will fire on these pulsars, though on occasional hot shot pilot has

been known to let loose a few laser blasts at the strange vessels...all to no effect.

The pulsar is known to have a velocity rating and maneuver rating of 10, and the one observation of its fire power (destroying an asteroid in the ship's path) indicates that it has a burner class of at least 2. No other specifications have been determined (the ship is too typical for the standard *DeltaVee* system).

ALIEN SPACESHIP ATTRIBUTE CHART

ATTRIBUTES	RAM JET		SOLARSHIP		MODULAR SHIP	
	See 2	See 2	See 2	See 2	See 2	See 2
Number of Pods						
Velocity Rating	2	4	11			
Maneuver Rating	2	4	7			
Energy Capacity	See 4	See 4	298			
Energy Burn Rate	See 4	See 4	12			
Streamlined	yes	yes	yes			
Burner Class	1	2	2			
Armor Class	1	2	2			
Forcefield Class	1	1	2			
Civ Level	8	7	8			
Target Program	-4	-6	-6			

Notes:

- Each Pod at the Modular Ship has these specifications.
- These ships do not have pods.
- The Modular Ship has a variable number of pods, depending on the size of ship encountered.
- These ships are always considered to have sufficient fuel to function throughout the length of any battle. ■■

There's Only One Universe ...and How It Came to Be That Way by Gerry Klug

My first assignment upon being hired by SPI was to assist in the development of the science fiction role-playing game, *Universe*. Being a veteran of role-playing, I was intrigued with the possibility of being in a position to "fix" all the ill-written and illogical rules I felt had been perpetrated on the science fiction role-playing community beforehand. When I joined on the project, John Burleweld, the game's designer, had done much of the preliminary work already and what I saw excited me. Here was a science fiction role-playing game which seemed to solve the problems its predecessors had created.

John and I discussed what we felt the game should do and contain, and we came up with a number of items which we knew should be specifically addressed. If the rules should be tightly written so even a non-role-player could attempt to play the game without the need for a consultation every other page, if the game should be playable shortly after purchase, so it had to have an adventure included, and if everything the rules implied could be done with a skill or in a situation should be defined and delineated so as to make it as easy for the GM. We feel we've succeeded and have created a game which is at least possible for a novice GM to pick up and referee, and at the same time, designed a game which stands up to comparison with any other in its field.

What should the veteran role-player look for when he purchases *Universe*? Among the many systems which the game features are two which stand out as unique: the Skillo and World Generation systems. Both of these provide information and utilities not found anywhere else in role-playing game design.

When John was writing the Skills section, he was very concerned that the phrase, "up to the GM's discretion" did not become a catchall cop-out for us when we couldn't explain something. This concern led John to use a task system, whereby each skill has a set list of tasks which the skilled individual may attempt to perform and, if successful, yield specific results and/or information.

Each task is defined by a formula which figures the percentage chance a character has at performing it. The formula takes into account the proficiency of the character with the skill and any applicable characteristic of the character which may affect the outcome. Various modifiers may be applied also. Therefore, even characters with the same skill level may have a slightly different chance of success in the same task due to differing characteristics.

This task system allows the GM to rationalize any a priori situation which the player feels his character's skill should apply to. By comparing the unknown situation to the examples given, the GM may derive a chance of success (if any) which would apply in the situation and be fair. The GM is not left out in the dark attempting to define what a certain skill means; you don't have to have a degree in planetology to use the task if

Also unique is the way in which skills are improved. Whenever a character uses a skill, percentile dice are rolled. Each skill has a range of several numbers indicated which add an experience point to the character's skill if one of those numbers appears on either die. These points are accumulated and cashed in later on to raise the skill by a new level. In most cases, the numbers needed combine in such a manner that a successful use of the skill will, more often than not, gain an experience point whereas an unsuccessful use would not. Experience Points are not arbitrarily awarded in the game (unlike many other role-playing games) by the GM; the players themselves keep track of their advancement. There are guidelines for skills' use so none can be over-used in a manner designed to simply gain out of all points.

The World Generation system is interesting enough to play as its own game. Science fiction role-playing has been crying out for a good, simple, complete and easy World including both planets and moons. The *Universe* World Generation system for a long time, and *Universe* may have the answer. In my experience as a *Traveller* referee, I always felt the need for an easy system for rapid star system generation. Often the players would travel in unexpected directions, and I would have to stop the games for long periods of time while I fiddled dice. Needless to say, this was very boring for the players.

The *Universe* World Generation system is three tiered so that first, a cursory generation may be accomplished to give broad generalizations of the system and its worlds, second, a detailed look is then established for each world's geography and planetology; and third, specific details are given about settlements, resources, spaceports, law levels, etc. While the highly detailed examination of each world is lengthy, the cursory glance takes 5 minutes and gives both the GM and the player enough information to make such basic decisions as whether or not to stay and explore this system, what there is of interest, and so forth. This quick glance assumes all the players have done is hyper-jumped into the system and are examining it from the jump point with their scanners.

The World Generation system also details how to actually draw the worlds in a system. Rather than simply generating a series of numbers, the *Universe* system helps you portray the geographic features of the world as a *world log*. The world logs contain graphic layouts of the various sized worlds as viewed from both the north and south poles. The GM generates the details of the world and draws in each *environ* (a space on the world which is a square 4000m across) the geographic type which exists there. As each *environ* is drawn in, the visual picture of the world begins to take form, and the GM mixes and matches *environ*s to form the kind of world picture he desires.

Along with Skillo and World Generation, the rules for *Universe* detail Character Generation, Equipment, Robots, Character

Action, Space Travel, Creatures, NPC's and gives a full adventure to start the GM and the player right off, once they've invested their hard earned money in the game.

Included in the *Universe* package (both basic sets and boxed version) is an interstellar Display which details all stars located within a 30-light year radius of Sol for sun. Each star is located upon a Cartesian coordinate (X, Y, and Z) system, and its astronomical data is detailed. Various binary and trinary stars are also detailed with their configurations and data noted. All of the major stars' distances in light years are also given in a road-map style matrix form, let's see: the distance from Alpha Centauri to Sirius Draconis is... for easy travel planning. All of *Universe* (for now) takes place within this sphere of stars and the GM generates the characteristics for each himself. Thus, while the map would remain the same from campaign to campaign, each GM's details of the stars would differ, creating interesting comparisons.

The Display itself is a work of art, being visually stunning as well as absolutely practical for play. We at SPI are wondering whether any map of its kind is really accessible to the public at this time, or do we have the only one? Many people have mentioned they would buy the map just for itself, gaining the information it contains. Alone it would be a valuable addition to a GM's science fiction source library.

Concern about the problems facing novice players or GM's when they picked up *Universe* for the first time was expressed often during the project, but especially in regards to the Adventure Guide. *Universe* has three rules booklets: the Gamemaster's Guide (containing the rules), an Adventure Guide (containing creature, non-player characters, and the adventurals), and *DataVite* (the spaceship combat system). In the Adventure Guide we gave the fledgling GM too much guidance by example as we had room for a crucial element for any beginning GM: the creation of other people with whom the characters interact. The list of 40 non-player characters provides the GM with examples at the myriad kinds of people to place in the characters' path. Some are deadly, some amiable, some humorous, some inconsequential, but all interesting and, I hope, inspirational. GM's may use these NPC's straight out of the booklet as they are or change them to fit individual tastes. It is through the GM's non-player characters that the players most directly interact with the GM, which may be the single most enjoyable element of role-playing.

Also detailed in the Adventure Guide are various creatures. With the laws of probability being what they are, there is no way we could have listed every kind of alien creature explorers might find outside our solar system, and our list of 40 doesn't pretend to include all possibilities. What it does do, however, is set up an easily adapted system of mix-and-match powers which the GM can use to create creatures of his own, and,

DRAGON TROUS (continued from page 24)

left out (overlooked?) overland movement rates. How did one get from point "A" to point "B"? Asprats n? Elevats r? Subways? So, one of the first things I did was create an overland movement chart which I have used ever since in my campaign with little modification. What changes were made concerned mounted movement rates, I said which I consulted Al N's since I began to work at SPI; he provided me with extremely valuable information regarding strategic cavalry movement throughout history. Thus, I believe the accompanying Overland Movement Chart is accurate not only in a "fantasy" sense (working in a campaign) but in a "historical" sense as well.

Some of you are undoubtedly asking, "Why do men on horses move at the same rate as men on foot?" Well, it has been shown historically that while horses can indeed move much faster than a man in shirt tights, over the long haul the amount of movement evens out. The greater speed is neutralized by the fact horses have to stop and water, graze, etc., while humans need to stop less often.

DRAGON OVERLAND MOVEMENT CHART

TERRAIN	RATE OF EXERCISE				
	LIGHT	MEDIUM	HEAVY	STRENUOUS	
Cavern	5/-	10/-	15/-	20/-	
Field	15/15	25/25	30/40*	35/50*	
Marsh ¹	-/-	5/5	10/10*	15/15*	
Plain	15/15	25/25	30/40*	40/50*	
Rough ²	10/5	15/10	20/15*	25/-	
Waste ³	10/5	15/10	20/15*	-/-	
Woods ⁴	10/5	15/10	20/15*	25/-	

Number before the slash indicates movement in miles per day on foot; number after indicates mounted movement (assuming horses). Rates for other animal types must be adjusted by the GM. The day assumes a total of 8 hours marching. The effects of adverse weather must be adjusted by the GM.

Notes:

1. That type of movement at that particular exercise is impossible.

2. Movement rates assume some sort of passable terrain; total swimming is impossible except by canoes/boats/etc.

3. If terrain is mountainous, halve rates on foot and prohibit mounted movement.

4. If terrain is desert, the GM should apply structures regarding effects of heat, dehydration, etc.

5. If terrain is deep woods, halve the movement rates.

6. In these rate of exercise categories, the horses' rate will deteriorate 33% per day. They can travel at these rates for approximately 4 consecutive days and then they will die.

7. Any path or road negates this effect of other terrain and the Plain movement rates are employed when using them.

The main advantage in mounted movement is that the rider does not get nearly as tired and can perform more tasks at the end of the journey; treat the rider of any mounted beast as expending fatigue at a rate less than normal (i.e., a rider mounted on a horse which is moving in the Heavy column himself loses Fatigue in the Medium column).

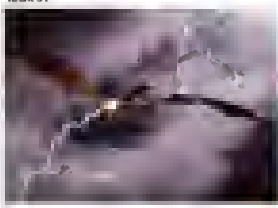
In the next issue, I will talk a little about Character Generation, Experience Points and Treasures. ■■

FILM & TELEVISION (continued from page 13)

responsible for many of the impressive effects in both *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Alien* (the won an Academy Award for its special effects in *Alien*), was in charge of making Vermithrax believable. The dragon was built at Georges Lucas' Industrial Light and Magic, Inc. outside of San Francisco. After construction it was shipped to England for Johnson's use in conjunction with his small stop-frame models.

Graphon artist David Burnett was the dragon's designer. "The most important thing is the dragon's form in the final battle's flying sequence," said Burnett. "Because of this action, we decided very early along to design a dragon that looked best when flying. The emphasis on flight, subsequently, dictated that the dragon look light enough to fly, and have an enormous wingspan." Vermithrax is not just a mindless engine of destruction. Since the monster was supposed to register intelligence along with a wide range of emotions, he had to be designed with more care than the typical movie monster. "The key to Vermithrax is the relationship of the beast to the land, much like a man's temple and relaxed stature. The dragon's blow sweeps back. It has a hunched and slightly hunched, intelligent look. This is not a creature that is simply programmed to eat, but a creature with a mind — albeit a malevolent one."

"You won't feel sympathy for the dragon," explained Burnett, "but it will have a kind of majesty. We didn't want to end up with the Alien which was too repulsive to look at."



They needn't have worried. The dragon is a graceful, yet menacing presence. The blend of giant-sized moving pieces with stop-frame work is so deftly pulled off that in places it is hard to tell what kind of effect is being employed.

But, aside from the special effects side, there are better reasons to see *Dragonslayer*. The film's flaws hope that this will be a long time of fantasy films to home. The *Star Wars* boom has brought us more science fiction and fantasy films and after this than we have ever had before. Many of them have been explosive and poorly made, but not all. *Dragonslayer* is more than "boy-meets-monster, boy-kills-monster, boy-gets-girl."

This film is a subtle study of early 6th Century Britain. The clothing is tough and hand-stitched. There is no dyed cloth, hand-laid twill, or paving in the highways. The movie is populated with real peasants, subservient to authority and tired of day-to-day existence. They obey their king out of fear, for with no freedoms, they don't complain.

And this touch of realism is the struggle evident in the film between the vanishing magicians and the early Christians. Not willing to bend their knee to popular culture, Barwood and Robbins have portrayed this wild war as realistically as possible. The villagers turn their backs on their druidic roots and run off to be baptized, hoping that the Christian God can stop Vermithrax. They cheer at the dragon's death, but give the credit to their God. The king also comes out as the dragon's smoldering assassin and drives his sword into it while his counselor proclaims him the "dragonslayer." The real heroes, Gelfin and Valsin, are ignored by all and must move on lest they become victims of the bowdlerizers.

The characters in *Dragonslayer* are portrayed as real human beings. Gelfin is a brash, sometimes unsufferable knight. Often arrogant and childish, he is a hero who needs to be taught a lesson. Similarly, there are brave people, sensible people, cowardly people, stupid people, and so forth populating the film. Though this dialogue is occasionally stiff, there is a believable reality. When the people and settings of a fantasy are so carefully wrought as they are here, it is easy to get an audience to accept so small and wonderful a thing as a dragon.

Christopher John

To Help Us Better Fulfill Your Customer Service Request...

...please do not include any other message to SPI on the same message as your renewal or subscription to any magazine, or on any customer service complaint about an SPI product. By combining both messages on one piece of paper, there is a good chance that either one or the other message will be lost. You may, if you wish, include a separate sheet with a second message with your renewal, subscription, or customer service complaint. Please make sure to include your name and address on both pieces of paper. However, for more effective service, it is best to send SPI two separate letters, one for each message.

Feedback Results, Area nr. 8

Rank	Item	Rating
1	Games Rating Chart	6.83
2	Games	6.79
3	Science Fiction Games Samples	6.67
4	Designer's Notes	6.45
5	Ragnarok I article	6.42
6	Ragnarok I game	6.37
7	Pandora's Link	6.34
8	Science for Science Fiction	6.11
9	Facts for Fantasy	6.11
10	Film & TV	6.10
11	Books	5.94
12	Media	5.86
Area 8 Overall		6.66

Games

Griffin Mountain

Authors: Rudy Kraft, Paul Jaquays & Greg Stafford
202-page softcover book, 30" x 22" monochrome map
CHAOSium Co., \$46.00

Adventure supplements for role-playing games have been assiduously avoided in this column, because there are only so many ways to express displeasure with a type of product. The seminal adventures had player characters locking down doors and slaughtering monsters in the non-privacy of the latter's dungeon rooms like so many dogs snoring Pavlovian bells, or presented the characters with vast, airy dungeons thinly disguised as "wildernesses." Admittedly, not every gamesmaster had or has the time to construct adventures — let alone worlds — but what was available commercially had less imagination than an autopsied.

There is, of course, a learning curve for the design of adventures, just as there is with other game-related products. Either Flying Buffalo or Meramagim introduced the number paragraph style of adventure, which neatly presented the simplest of adventures without insulting the players' collective intelligence. Full-size adventures then began to offer multiple options, instead of single-solution puzzles or monster shooting galleries. But nothing has advanced the state-of-the-art quite as much as *Griffin Mountain*.

Though ganacally clesed as an adventure, *Griffin Mountain* is properly a sourcebook. The subject is not a single expedition, which can only be used once for a given group of player-characters, but a thorough examination of a 20,000 square mile area in about the same detail as a Michelin guide. Instead of the location of the nearest AAA and the best restaurant, the gamesmaster is supplied with extensive background on local politics and beings. The authors have inexcusably tied the package to the *Runesquest* rules, though a handy gamesmaster can convert the statistics to another system with a concentrated effort.

The mountain of the title is as convenient a landmark as any in the Balazar-Elder Wilds territory, which is a small part of the world of Glorantha. Greg Stafford introduced his fantasy vision to adventure gaming in the brilliant *White Bear and Red Moon*. If this wonderful name was brutally sacrificed on the altar of the great god Marketing, and now the game tamed goes by the name of *Dragon Pass* I Glorantha is no Tolkien migration, no pseudo-medieval hog-dog-podge, no "magic is really science" double-talk, but a genuine, original fantasy. The world needs no support from game material, and perhaps suffers slightly because it is viewed only from a role-playing and board game perspective.

Here the Crimson Batapredator terror, the Red Moon's influence is greatest up to the Glorwines, the Lunar Empire wars with lamong others: Sartar, and the characters are swept into the epochal Haro Wero. Reihags Roger Zelazny's *Jack of Shadows* conveys a vaguely analogous sense of wonder, perhaps Professor M.A.R. Barker's Tekumel

is more "realistically" described, but Glorantha is certainly a unique experience.

Balazar and Elder Wilds are, essentially, a refuge for characters from the Dragon Pass area. At Dragon Pass empires clash and great magics are unleashed, which is hardly healthy for beginning or moderately-experienced characters. True, the Lunar Empire has designs on Balazar, but the Imperial rulers content themselves with thoroughly infiltrating the tribes and fortresses with their agents. If and when the Empire enters in force, the divided peoples should fall swiftly to its armies, but for now its energies are directed elsewhere.

The character of the barbaric tribes and the semi-civilized folk in their fortresses is deftly sketched in several of the beginning chapters. We learn of the Balazaring tribesman's love for their dogs, of King Glyphus of Elkoi's emulation of his Lunar masters, of Joh Mith's caravan, which unite the region as much as anything else. These soften the harsh impact of character statistic presentation, which often makes this sort of book look like an accountant's vacation reading.

What makes *Griffin Mountain* an evolutionary step in the progression of adventures is its treatment of player-characters. The world is real enough — and frightening enough — so that the player will not chivy the gamesmaster until they rule all they can see. Young and inexperienced characters have their niches in society, with plenty of potential to rise in the world. However, success comes from hard work, sacrifice and a little luck, which makes it all the more rewarding. No matter how powerful the characters become in game terms, there are beings who can put them in their place. The ancient powers are a part of the magical land, and not just something the gamesmaster tosses out at the start of his first adventure, never to be heard from again.

The sourcebook does inherit a problem common to works of this genre: much of the information is for the gamesmaster's eyes only. The time-tested stop-gap answer — that the players not be allowed to look at the text — is still the only truly satisfactory way to deal with this problem, though the sheer wealth of material makes it hard for any but the killjoy to anticipate all the surprises this area affords.

The authors recognize this potential drawback, and do address it from time to time. Rumors are not necessarily always true or false, the gamesmaster is given a set of rumors, and he may decide on the veracity of each (while remaining consistent with the rest of the scenario). Map locations are not fixed for all points of interest, which can disconcert the player who sneaks a look.

Griffin Mountain is a textbook illustration of how to sustain interest in a fantasy campaign: make it seem real. The gamesmaster inevitably puts more energy into his characterizations of the non-player characters because they are presented as fleshed-out beings. Players pay special attention to rumors which they have to pay for and which are not always revealed as true or false at the end of the current adventure. A caravan guard's job is not so unpalatable when Joh Mith takes the guard with him to exotic locales without exposing him to excessive

risk. If this sounds like an argument for the suspension of disbelief, it is. Believable fantasy is the key to a successful adventure or campaign.

Consider Gorn Orta, a cantankerous-old giant who must decide between joining his ancestors as part of a mountain range or remaining the premier dealer in magical objects north of Dragon Pass. Gorn Orta, his young-giant friends and his troll dependents are one of the more amusing — and interesting — encounters. Or the Vampire of Gork Hills, who may or may not still stalk the land. Or Gondo Holst's caravan, which is a front for the most nefarious of activities. Because of these wonders, it comes as a disappointing surprise that *Griffin Mountain* is named for the griffins that inhabit its peak. The best recommendation for the material is that the reader will want more when he reaches the end of the book.

Not that *Griffin Mountain* is without its faults. Many anachronistic *OSGs* pervade the material and some of the people descriptions (Itham "DSDam" is not meant as a slur on TSR's work on that role-playing game. If the company pioneered much work in the role-playing game, it stands to reason that it originated many of the mistakes. I there is no reason, for example, for most of the creatures to have standard treasures no matter when they are met. Nor does the Balazar-Elder Wilds region have to be so conveniently self-contained through this arrangement vastly simplifies the organization of information. The major drawback, for the majority of role-players, is the linkage with the *Runesquest* system. *RM* may be one of the better sets of role-playing rules, but it is hardly one of the most widely disseminated.

The layout of the text is extremely graphically attractive. Salient points are highlighted in each section, while the sections are clearly separated by topic or for new entries. It is a pleasure just to leaf through the pages of *Griffin Mountain*: if the reader is one of the many who collect game products to look at and not necessarily play, he will be quite satisfied by the content and style.

Griffin Mountain is not just better because it is bigger. Messrs. Kraft, Jaquays and Stafford have created a campaign which demonstrates, by example, what a gamesmaster should prepare for a serious role-playing campaign. They understand what should be highlighted as important — we are, after all, viewing a culture as adventures rather than, say, as scullery maids — and, even more basically, what should be included. There is no magical, mysterious formula for writing successful adventure or campaign material; only solid work, imagination and an understanding of the needs of the role-playing public are required.

"Oh, to be on *Griffin Mountain*... you will be leaving there too soon."

The Lords of Underneath

Design: Keith Groer
24-page rule booklet, 12" x 14" (hard), 35 counters, 1 bag, die, box
Manservant, Inc., \$3.85

All night, it's time to put to rest that old war-gamer's tale that mini-games are for mini-brains. There is an art to design for a

small package, just as there is for the monster games. *Ogre* and *The Creature That Ate Shaboyan* are not, perhaps, the most thought-provoking of subjects, but both provide enjoyment and a completed game in about two hours.

Metagaming, which originated the small game concept several years ago, did give credence to the ancient traditionalist gamers with its recent slew of execrable product. It takes a special skill — which is than fully not that prevalent — to define the boundaries of incoherence as did the *Holy War* rules, or to have the gall to repack the ancient childhood game of "foot beats scissors beats paper" as a new release. (News may be slow getting to certain parts of the country.) The unmitigated *Dimension Demons* — which had little to do with dimensions and nothing to do with demons — looked good by comparison to some of the poor material which comprise the last seven Metagaming releases.

The Lords of Underneath, on the other hand, is an excellent example of how to make a good mine-game. None of the design concepts was born the players over with their originality, nor need they do so. The rationale is quite familiar to role-playing if not the fantasy audience dwells, in the course of a mammoth underground renewal project, have unearthed enough treasure to warrant the attention of greedy adventurers, monster and armies.

The map displays a labyrinthine complex underneath a mountain. Passageways are graded by how wide each one is: a dragon has no difficulties flying through the wide corridors, but cannot even enter the narrowest of tunnels. The military companies have limited attack capabilities without the proper room to maneuver. With admirable elegant touches, designer Gross blends some of the most conventional design concepts into rules uniquely suited to subterranean warfare.

The map gives *Lords* its flavor, and the game is tailored to take advantage of all the challenges inherent in conflict in this most unusual terrain. For additional variety, the mapsheet can be cut into three geomorphic pieces, though I have not experimented enough with this approach to recommend it one way or the other.

The scenarios initially appear to be unbalanced in the favor of the inhabitants. This advantage is illusory, for the player on location must alert each of his units before he can use them. The marauding player hopes to dispatch the anarchy unit, which can alert friendly units within four hexes, so that he can destroy the powerful companies piece-meal. The game accelerates at a dizzying pace, as the invader is forced into desperate action by the mobilization of the forces of Underneath. The game is, at heart, a study of fantasy command actions, and few other customers excite the imagination of the game players as does this type of raid.

The scenario ingeniously combines themes long ago cliché by fantasy writers with inspired victory conditions — it does not have enough experience with *Lords* to state whether or not it is balanced, but the conditions sure do give a lot of fun. There are the defunct remnants of an army fleeing in

to their stronghold; a surprise attack on the Dwarven New Year; the doubt to regain the pre-67 borders; the usual draconian barbaric party of which the dwarves are unwilling quoter; good guys trapped in the caverns by a evil wizard; and a free-for-all for the gold. The last scenario is almost a game unto itself, as the players try to direct the nasties towards each other, and fervently hope that the dragon is dead or mired.

My only disagreement with the design is the use of a hex-grid for the map. Hexes are superfluous, both aesthetically and practically. The architecture of the tunnels is twisted into natural configurations by the regularities of the hex-grid, when hashmarks could just as easily have bounded each movement area.

Metagaming is also making forward progress with its physical playability. The company has come out of its Dark Ages to discover the mystical process of die-cutting. The counters still show a tendency to self-destruct when touched by human hands though, by way of compensation, the illustrations are quite attractive. The map is drawn in unappealing shades of green and blue, mounted on a decently heavy stock, and is acceptably functional during play. The rules, most importantly, are remarkably clear — for any company, not just Metagaming — though the rules writers left a few minor flubs to remind us they are human.

Lords demonstrates that small fantasy boardgames can be the result of quality work. The emphasis is on the complete, the playable, but never on the simplistic. While other summer 1991 games or upcoming winter fires, *Lords* will be played in front of those fires.

Second Thoughts

A spirited correspondence with Dragonair reader Donald Mol may have caused me to conclude that I was overly harsh in dismissing Yapun's *Shooting Stars* (1981). The premise, as dreadful as it may be, should not have wholly overshadowed a decent vector-based movement system — whatever the system's antecedents. *Shooting Stars*, when considered solely as a game, can be ranked with *Vector 3* and *DeltaVee*, both of which are at least acceptable space tactical games. My apologies to Steve Paul, who tells me that the background which so infuriated me was added by another person well after the game part of the package had been completed.

The design team for Flying Buffalo's *Tunnels and Trolls* point out that the game functions best as an introduction to role-playing and as a vehicle to get time-constrained players in and out of dungeon adventures quickly. *TST* is probably the best role-playing product in these two respects, however, I still believe it swifly pales once the players want to get into any deeper involvement in role-playing scenarios (193).

A gremlin wormed its way into the review of Steve Newberg's *Dark Stars* (1991). The three non-human races caused by power- and light travel. Only the Terrans have developed FTL travel.

Readers are invited to comment on opinions expressed in these pages. My words, after all, are writ in paper, not in stone.

Eric Goldberg

BOOKS *Reviewed from page 141*

novel, head and shoulders — well, head — above most of the mameas that is fantasy being published today.

Schrodinger's Cat II: The Trick Top Hat is Robert Anton Wilson's sequel to *Schrodinger's Cat I: The Universe Next Door*, and, naturally, the second book in a trilogy. Like *SC I*, it is a sequence of disjointed and orbitally connected episodes dealing with a couple dozen characters, some of which live in different universes from each other, occurring at variously different times, some synchronously. Wilson seems to have taken upon himself the task of attempting to enlighten through confusion, a distinctly Zen and certainly discordant process. Cutting through the verbiage (much of which is delightful), one comes to the core of Wilson's argument, Wilson's premier metaphor is Schrodinger's cat, which he sees as the antithesis of Pavlov's dog. Schrodinger once stated an apparent paradox, suppose one locks a cat in a box, and connects to a shotgun in the box a mechanism triggered by the decay of a radioactive atom. After one half-life, there is a precisely 50% chance that the atom has decayed and that the cat is dead, and a 50% chance that the atom is yet whole, as is the cat. There is no way of finding out whether the cat is dead or not except by opening the box. Is the cat dead or alive? According to modern physics, there is no way of telling. According to the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, one can never determine the position and velocity of a particle. This is because the process of observation changes the system. Wilson answers Schrodinger's paradox by analogizing to the uncertainty principle: the cat is neither dead nor alive but perhaps both until an observer opens the box. The process of observation changes the system. Thus, Wilson claims, reality is a subjective concept, he stipulates what Heinfain calls multi-ego solipsism.

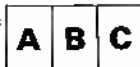
Wilson is if peculiar writer in some ways, he is the culmination of all many trends in science fiction, in others, he is the rejection of all many. He respects linear storytelling, scientific extrapolation, and stylized prose; indeed, his favorite writer and, of course, model is Joyce. On the other hand, he is certainly writing science fiction; his book is a purposeful exploration of the philosophical consequences of modern physics. (Readers should be aware that modern physics does not necessarily support Wilson's assumptions any more than Darwinian biology supports social Darwinism; Wilson is analogizing and theorizing, nothing more.) I throw into the potpourri a dollop of sex, a magnum of Wiccan magic, and more than a bit of mysticism. Wilson is not a writer for the unwary, the *Schrodinger's Cat* series is immensely enjoyable, but requires a reader who will think. Aided by a space opera need not apply.

...Greg Casby



DELTA VEE ENHANCED (continued from page 26)

Map
Deployment:

**Player 1 (Poseddy) Deployment:**

One Corco Mu spaceship counter A1 with ten arsenal pods, one battle/communications pod and one energy pod. The ship is set up facing any direction in hex 0707 on Map A with a velocity of 5. **(Note:** All pods and the hull have an armor level of 2. Also, the ship has a forcefield of 2.) One Dagger Iuunter B1 with one energy pod and one crew pod. This ship enters in hex 0707 on Map A under the following condition: If at any time the energy pod on the Mu is damaged or has used up all its energy, the Dagger may be brought on to refuel the ship. The Dagger may transfer its energy pod to the Mu if it is in the same hex with the other ship for an Enemy Movement Phase. The Mu must jettison one of its pods to be able to accept the new energy pod if a destroyed pod fulfills this condition.

Player 2 (Hal-Katul) Deployment:

Three Corco Gamma spaceship counters A, B and C1 each with a light weapon pod and two buffered cargo pods. Two Corco Zeta Iuunters D and E1 each with a hunter pod, a light weapons pod, a crew pod, two buffered cargo pods and an energy pod. One Corco

Jora Ithia counter must be crated with two hunter pods, a tractor beam pod, three buffered cargo pods, a crew pod, an energy pod and a pump pod. One Corco Mu Ithia counter must be crated with two light weapons pods, two hunter pods, a battlecrafi pod (with a *Tarvitecker 5000* battlecrafi), a tractor beam pod, four buffered cargo pods, and two crew pods. These ships are deployed anywhere on Map C facing any direction, and with a velocity from T to 4.

Victory Conditions:

For each ship the Poseddy player destroys, he receives a ship Victory Point. If the Dagger resupply ship is brought into play, the Poseddy player loses one Victory Point. If his ship has more than six pods damaged, he loses 2 Victory Points. If more than three pods are destroyed, he loses 2 Victory Points more. If the Mu is destroyed, the Poseddy player automatically loses. The Poseddy player wins if he has 2 Victory Points by the end of the game. **(Note:** The game continues until one side is completely destroyed; it is thus possible for the Poseddy player to have at least two Victory Points, but still lose the game if his ship is destroyed.)

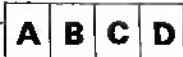
SCENARIO 10: The Chess Players

Marjan and Gandapor are multi-billionaires who have built ter-turting financial empires. Usually acting outside Federation laws, the two men have been known to do anything to make an extra Trian or two. Fre-

quent raids on each other's shipping has lately caused such strain that each man is determined to eliminate the quasi-military fears of his rival. The two assembled fleets meet near Bato Hydra to determine which empire will come out on top.

Each player has 175,000 Trian with which to build a fleet using the accompanying Craft and Pod Cost Chart. Each player should keep his fleet secret until the combat begins; at this and at the game players should examine each other's expenditures to make sure the opponent is more honest than the billionaire he is representing. If a player surrenders, he automatically loses.

Map
Deployment:

**Player 1 Deployment:**

Before ships are set up, the player secretly writes down a hex number on any map. When play is ready to begin, the player sets up his fleet within one hex of the hex chosen, facing in any direction and with a velocity of T to 4.

Player 2 Deployment:

The second player sets up his fleet following the same directions as those for the first player.

Victory Conditions:

The first player to destroy his opponent's fleet entirely is the winner. ■■

Down in the Dungeons? Try...High Fantasy!



HIGH FANTASY is your introduction to a brand-new series of high adventure, role-playing games. Unlike other fantasy role-playing games, **HIGH FANTASY** is simply designed - you don't have to memorize staggering amounts of material. Instead, you'll learn how to become a warrior, a powerful wizard and charge through realms of blood-thirsty monsters, swarded knights, and wondrous magic. You'll get all the basic rules and descriptions of monsters, plus a solo adventure to get you acquainted with this new fantasy world.



ADVENTURES IN HIGH FANTASY begins where **HIGH FANTASY** leaves off. You'll get four wondrous adventures.

Fortress Ellender is a breathtaking adventure where you'll match your wits against an evil demon prince.

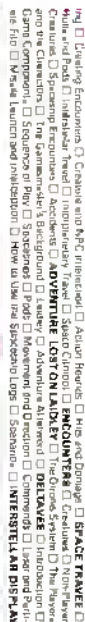
Moorguard is a powerful wizard who tries to create the ultimate weapon as players stumble across his taboo-riddled land. **Terra Ash** is a temple buried for hundreds of years with three warning societies that believe the world has perished. **Lord of Conquest** is for those **HIGH FANTASY** players who love the battlefields of miniatures, a complete set of rules for 25 m.m. fantasy wargaming.

ACT NOW! DON'T DELAY:

Go to your favorite hobby store and demand the **HIGH FANTASY GAMES**.

Reston Publishing Company, Inc.
A Praetika-Hall Company
Reston, Virginia 22090

Now Available!
GM Screen and
Spare Log Kit
\$8.00 At Your Local Dealer



HARRY HARRISON'S THE RETURN OF THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT RULES OF PLAY



- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Game Components
 - 2.1 The Map
 - 2.2 The Paragraphs
 - 2.3 The Playing Pieces
- 3.0 The Cast
- 4.0 Sequence of Play
 - 4.1 How to Play the Game
 - 4.2 Set-Up
 - 4.3 Game-Turn Sequence
 - 4.4 Combat Sequence
- 5.0 Villain Determination
- 6.0 Onfitting
- 7.0 Movement
 - 7.1 Entry
 - 7.2 Limitations and Restrictions
 - 7.3 Doors
 - 7.4 The Cutting Laser
 - 7.5 Speed of Movement
 - 7.6 Bugging Out
- 8.0 Exploration
 - 8.1 Restrictions on Exploration
 - 8.2 Previously Visited Boxes and Characters
 - 8.3 Alertness Checks
- 9.0 Clues
 - 9.1 Volunteered Clues
 - 9.2 Stumbling Over Clues
- 10.0 Combat: Set-Up and Initiative
 - 10.1 Set-Up
 - 10.2 Initiative
- 11.0 Combat: Movement
 - 11.1 Facing
 - 11.2 Movement
 - 11.3 Uncontrolled Beings
- 12.0 Combat: Resolution and Equipment
 - 12.1 Hand-to-Hand Combat
 - 12.2 Fire Combat
 - 12.3 Special Fire Combat Rules
 - 12.4 Combat Effects
 - 12.5 Equipment
 - 12.6 Uncontrolled Beings
- 13.0 Special Equipment Rules
 - 13.1 Electric Prod
 - 13.2 Reloading Weapons
 - 13.3 Cigars
 - 13.4 Snits
 - 13.5 Robot Slavers
 - 13.6 Grenades
 - 13.7 Nostrums
 - 13.8 Miscellaneous Equipment
- 14.0 Vacuum and Darkness
 - 14.1 Vacuum
 - 14.2 Darkness
 - 14.3 Decompression Table
- 15.0 Reorganization
- 16.0 Deactivating the Computer and Winning
 - 16.1 Deactivating the Computer
 - 16.2 Identifying the Villain
 - 16.3 Suspension of Disbelief
- 17.0 Playing with Two Players Paragraphs

Read This First:

The rules to *The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat* are organized by major topics arranged in the order in which they occur in the play of the game. Each major topic is given a number and a name, below which is usually given a General Rule or description which summarizes the rules in that Section. This is, in most instances, followed by numbered paragraphs called Cases, which give the specifics of the rule. Note that the numbering of the Cases is a decimal form of the Section number. Players should examine the map and contents and then quickly read the rules, without trying to memorize them. Then the game should be set up and a "trial run" made. *The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat* is designed to be played solitaire or with two players. Note that, when reading the rules, you should avoid reading through the paragraphs on pages 10 through 15. These paragraphs are the heart of the game, and their intent is to challenge you with unexpected decisions and events.



Inventory of Game Parts

Each copy of *The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat* should contain the following components:

- One 22" x 34" mapsheet
- One sheet of 140 die-cut counters
- One 16-page rule folder
- Two dice (not in *Ares* edition)

If any of these components are missing or damaged, notify SPI, Customer Service Department, 257 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010.

Rules Questions

We hope you enjoy this SPI game. Should you have any difficulty interpreting the rules, please write to SPI, printing the question so that it can be answered by a simple sentence, word, or number. You must enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope. Write to: SPI, Rules Questions Editor for *The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat*, 257 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010.

[1.0] Introduction

Once again, the lives of helpless victims are in threat and a champion must be found. A space station dominated by a berserk computer, must be penetrated; the computer, miserably misprogrammed, must be shut down; the villain, prodded by a machine known to none, must be exposed. And what man alone can accomplish so much without retaining your credibility to the betting public? What master of intrigue can do this without uncovering a planible to return to an impossible dilemma? Who but Slippery Jim diGriz — the man who has already saved the universe twice — once more abroad in *The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat*.

[2.0] Game Components

GENERAL RULE:

The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat consists of one 22" x 34" map, 140 counters (80 ring size and 60 double size), and a 16-page booklet of rules and component paraphrase. The boxed version also includes two 6-sided dice.

CASES

[2.1] THE MAP

Printed on the game mapsheet are two Tactical Display and the Space Station map, as well as various tracks and tables. Note that the Space Station is printed around one of the Tactical Displays. The tracks and tables include: two Alertness and Suspicion of Disbelief Tracks (one for each Tactical Display); the Terrain Key; the Die Roll Chart Holding Box; the Villain Matrix (p. 25); the Hand-to-Hand Combat Effect Table (12.16); the Weapons Table (12.28); the Wound Table (12.47); and the Decompression Table (14.3).

The numbering system is printed on the Space Station map identifier each of the boxes on

the map. Or, in other words, the boxes are numbered A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, C1, C2, and C3. Clockwise, starting and returning to the top of the display, boxes are numbered from 01 to 80. Thus, the topmost box of the display is C301, and the box immediately counterclockwise to it is C360.

[2.2] THE PARAGRAPHS

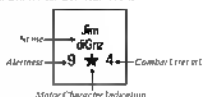
The paragraphs describe all the events that may occur during the game. Each is assigned a three-digit number; these numbers identify the paragraph and do not affect the sequence in which they are read.

[2.3] THE PLAYING PIECES

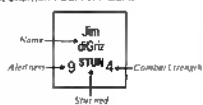
The counters include 36 Villain Chits, 8 Character counters, 7 Robot Standby markers, 17 Robot counters, 46 Equipment counters, and 26 game markers.

SAMPLE COUNTERS

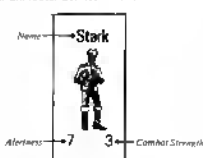
Major Character Counter Front



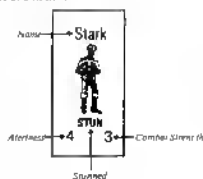
Major Character Counter Back



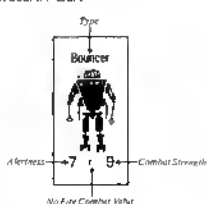
Minor Character Counter Front



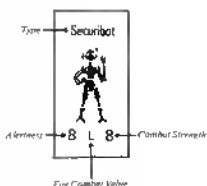
Minor Character Counter Back



Robot Counter Front



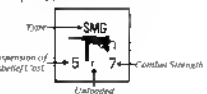
Robot Counter Back



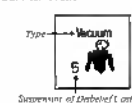
Weapon Counter Front



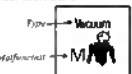
Weapon Counter Back



Bot Counter Front

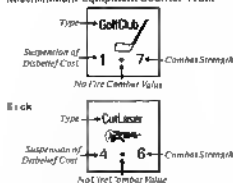


Bot Counter Back

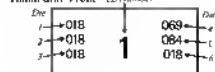


Note: All units are vulnerable to surprise, whether they are armored or not.

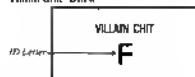
Miscellaneous Equipment Counters Front



Villain Chit Front



Villain Chit Back



GAME MARKERS



[3.0] The Cast

Not necessarily in order of appearance.

James "Slippery Jim" deGriz: The galaxy's greatest criminal — and elite fighter — our hero, disbonair, balding, with a taste for the finer things in life.

Angeline deGriz: His wife; competent, beautiful, and insanely jealous. If anyone is a match for deGriz, it's another deGriz.

Commander Stark: Grizzled, dent, and military SOB. Stark is Assistant Chief of Security aboard the space station.

Deputy Commander Tripp: Red-haired and intricate, Tripp is acting commander of the station.

Dr. Fritz: Branded and somewhat fond, Fritz is assistant scientist officer, originally trained as a geologist.

Rita "Ma" Young: Young and somewhat angry, Ma is a waitress at the Mexican Mesquite, one of the better restaurants on the station.

Joe Woloski, MBA: Pridgy and rather excitable, Woloski is a businessman trapped on the station when it was isolated by the mind computer.

Technician Corcoran: Greasy and clad in overalls, Corcoran does most of the station's dry-to-dry maintenance.

[4.0] Sequence of Play

CASES

[4.1] HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Follow the steps outlined in 4.2 (Set-Up), and then follow the Game-Turn Sequence outlined in 4.3. During each Game-Turn, you will be referred to one or more paragraphs; when referred to a paragraph, read it and follow the instructions therein. When our Game-Turn is completed, begin another. Continue to play our Game-Turn until (a) your character is dead; (b) your Suspension of Disbelief Index exceeds 75; or (c) the computer is destroyed. In the first two cases, you have lost; in the last case, you must return to the clues given you by the paragraphs in the course of the game, and try to figure out the identity of the villain. You have won if you succeed in (a) destroying the computer without expending more than 75 Suspension of Disbelief Points, and (b) correctly identifying the villain.

[4.2] SET-UP

A. Villain Determination

Sort the Villain Chits and choose one die track of chits, as specified in 3.0. Roll one die and place a Die Roll Chit with the same number as the die roll in the Die Roll Chit Holding Box on the game map.

B. Outfitting

Place the Suspension of Disbelief marker and the Alertness marker on the appropriate track on the game map. Place Wound marker on the Tactical Display. Choose the equipment your character is to take with him into the space station, and place counters for such equipment on the Tactical Display.

C. Entrancing

Decide whether you wish to play Jim or Angeline. Place your character's counter in any box on the Space Station Map which contains no entry arrow (see Train Key).

[4.3] GAME-TURN SEQUENCE

A. Movement

Examine the position of your character on

the Space Station Map and choose one adjacent box to which you wish him to move. Determine the effects of moving through the door between the two boxes (if any); if there is no door, determine the effects of using the cutting laser. If your character does not have the cutting laser and there is no door, he may not enter the box. Next, move your character's counter into his destination box.

B. Exploration

Determine the contents of the new box. If the box was previously visited, skip this step.

C. Interaction

Unless the box is empty or contains nothing of interest, your character may be forced to make a decision, engage robot, or character in combat, and/or make an Alertness Check. Use the rules for such to resolve this kind of interaction.

D. Reorganization

If the box contains any equipment, your character may pick the equipment up. At the same time, you may move the equipment marker on the Tactical Display and give any allied characters equipment or take equipment away from them. Weapons may be reloaded (if ammunition is available), and pilot and test aid kits may be used. Jim may reassign characters or robots in his control on the Tactical Display, if Jim has been joined by new characters or robots, place their counters on the display.

[4.4] COMBAT SEQUENCE

A. Initiative Determination Segment

Determine the Alertness Ratings of each being (i.e., characters and robots) involved in combat. The being with the highest Alertness Rating has the First Being Segment, the being with the second highest Rating then has the second Being Segment; and so on, until each being has undergone a Being Segment.

B. First Being Segment

1. **Movement.** The being may either move one box on the Tactical Display or change its facing by 90°; it may not do both.

2. **Equipment.** If the being is stunned, it becomes unstunned, but may take no further action. If it is not stunned and is adjacent to an enemy being, it may engage that being in hand-to-hand combat. If it has a hit weapon, it may use that weapon to attack enemy being. If it is a character, it may exchange equipment.

C. Subsequent Being Segments

The being with the next highest Alertness Rating begins Segment B, this continues until all beings have received a Being Segment. Once they have done so, a new Combat Round begins. Combat Rounds are repeated until (a) your character is dead, or (b) all your opponent is dead or enslaved.

[5.0] Villain Determination

GENERAL RULES

In order to win, you must correctly identify the villain responsible for warping the computer's programming. At various times, your character will meet some of the characters

who may be responsible, and will discover the lower which may help him identify the villain. There are no possible Villain (See 3.0)

PROCEDURE:

Each of the 36 Villain Chits is a double-sized card. On one side of each card is printed a letter from A to E, on the other side is one three-digit number and a single-digit ID Code (See 2.3).

1. Sort the Villain Chits by letter. Stack the chits with the same ID letter together. Once you have six stacks of chits each, flip each stack over so that the numbered sides, not the lettered sides, are showing.

2. Shuffle the stacks of Villain Chits and add on the table and select one chit at a time. The objective is to choose a stack of identically lettered Villain Chits without chit owing the letter code of the stack. Move the chit back on the table until you have forgotten the letters of the various stacks. Choose one chit, and put away the other chits; they will not be needed for the rest of the game. Avoid looking at the letters of the discarded chits.

3. Roll one die and place the Die Roll Chit corresponding to the number rolled in the Die Roll Chit Holding Box on the map.

[6.0] Outfitting

GENERAL RULE:

Before the game begins, you must determine what equipment your character will bring with him into the space station.

PROCEDURE:

1. Examine the equipment counters and choose the equipment you wish to take. Most types of equipment are self-explanatory; some are explained in 11.0.

2. The left-hand number of each equipment counter is its Suspension of Disbelief cost. If you increase a particular piece of equipment, you must pay that cost; move the Suspension of Disbelief marker or other track to reflect the expenditure. Note that the cost of the marker equipment is which is available. For example, there are only two cutting lasers, and they are printed on the back of a breath mask and the gold club. You may take up to two cutting lasers, and if you take both, you may not also take either the breath mask or the gold club.

3. Take the counters for the equipment you have chosen and place them on the Tactical Display. A counter may only be placed in the Suit box; other equipment must be distributed among the To Hand, On Body, and Leg Sheath boxes. (Equipment that is To Hand may be used at once; placing equipment On Body entails a brief delay; and Leg Sheath equipment requires a longer delay.)

Note: You must take a suit and you may take up to eight other pieces of equipment. Additional equipment may also be taken, but doing so entails a Suspension of Disbelief cost. Pay 6 Disbelief Points for each additional piece of equipment (above and beyond the cost indicated on the counter). Place such equipment anywhere convenient place on the Tactical Display. (During play, all excess equipment is considered to be On Body.)

[7.0] Movement

GENERAL RULE:

In the course of the game, move your character's counter on the Space Station map. The map consists of the three mid-color-coded rings, representing a deck, a corridor, and a Tactical Display. Each ring is separated from the others, and each is subdivided into three bands of rooms. The outer deck is C Deck, the middle B Deck, and the inner A Deck. A Deck is above B Deck, which is above C Deck. Thus, for example, box A226 is above box B226, which is above box C226. During movement, your character may move from his current box to try to enter the next box; diagonal movement is permitted. Movement from one deck to the next is permitted only if Accessway boxes, although downward movement is also permitted via the crating laser.

CASES:

[7.1] ENTRY

[7.11] At the beginning of the game, you must determine where your character will enter the space station.

[7.12] Some boxes on the Space Station Map are marked as potential entry points. Place your character's counter in the Entry Box of your choice.

[7.13] On the first Game-Turn, omit the Movement Step and proceed directly to exploration. It is assumed that the character has reached the entry box without mishap.

[7.2] LIMITATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

[7.21] All movement is to the adjacent box to which you wish your character to move, determine the type of the boundary between the two boxes. There are two types of boundaries between boxes: brickhead and doors (See Terrain Key). Note that diagonal movement is not permitted, nor may a character jump from one box to another without moving through the intervening box (See Exception 7.5).

[7.22] If the boundary is a brickhead, movement between the two boxes is prohibited unless your character or character moving with him has the cutting laser To Hand. If the cutting laser is available, follow the procedure outlined in 7.4.

[7.23] If the boundary is a door, the character must open the door before he can move into the box. Follow the procedure outlined in 7.3.

[7.24] If it occupies an Accessway box, he may move from his box to a box with the same ID number on an adjacent deck. Thus, a character in A136 could move to B136.

[7.25] If the cutting laser is available, the character may move from one deck to the next lower deck, even if he is not in an Accessway box. In essence, the laser is being used to cut a hole in the floor. Follow the procedure outlined in 7.4; if a breach is successfully made, move the counter one deck downward. Note that the laser may not be used to move upward.

[7.26] A character may never move through one of the heavy lines separating decks, even with the cutting laser.

[7.3] DOORS

[7.31] Designate one character to open the door. If no other characters are accompanying you, the character is automatically assumed to be the one operating the door.

[7.32] Roll two dice; take the number rolled on one die at the first digit of a two-digit number, and the number rolled on the other is the second digit. Refer to the paragraph with the same number as the number rolled. Example: if a 2 and a 3 were rolled, refer to paragraph 23.

[7.33] Read the section of the paragraph labelled Do as it follows the character.

[7.34] If the door is impassable if the door is locked and the lockpick is not available; or [b] the door is electrified and the character has gloves are not available; [c] if the door is covered with monofilament and solvent is not available. The character may not move through an impassable door, place an Impassable Door marker in the box with the hinges and point toward the door. The door will still be impassable if the character enters it.

[7.35] If a door is locked and your character (not being with him) has a loaded laser pistol, laser rifle, shotgun, or SMG, he may shoot the lock out. The door is automatically opened (removes the Impassable Door marker) and the weapon is automatically reloaded; flip it to the reloaded side. (Note that robot weapons never become reloaded, and that robots may shoot out locks with impunity.)

[7.4] THE CUTTING LASER

[7.41] If you or your character has the cutting laser To Hand, he may move through bulkheads, floors, and impassable doors.

[7.42] Roll two dice and add the numbers rolled; refer to the paragraph corresponding to the resulting number (2) follow the directions therein. Example: If the roll is 6 and 4, refer to paragraph 10.

[7.43] If you successfully breach a locked door, remove the impassable Door marker.

[7.44] If you successfully breach a brickhead or floor, place a Breach marker in the box. If the breach was made at a brickhead, place the marker with the Brickhead Breach side up at the point of the top of the counter toward the side of the box where the breach was made. If the breach was made at the floor, place the marker with the Floor Breach side up.

[7.45] A bulkhead breach opens a permanent means of access between two boxes. On Intense Game-Turn, your character will be able to move between the two boxes without using either a door or the cutting laser. A floor breach will always allow downward movement to the next deck.

[7.5] SPECIAL MOVEMENT

[7.51] Boxes A107, A123, A137, and A153 are connected across the center of the space station by a shuttle moving inside a tube. A character may move from any one of these four boxes to any other without moving through a door or using a cutting laser.

[7.52] If your character has a Inertion unit, he may move from any Entry Box to any other Entry Box. In essence, he is moving outside the station in space from one Entry Box to another. Any characters with him who lack Inertion units must be left behind.

[7.6] BUGGING OUT

If your character enters a box and you roll for the contents of the box, you may decide to bug out. Roll for your character's counter to the box from which he entered, place an Impassable Room marker in the box, and continue play.

[8.0] Exploration**CASES****[8.1] RESTRICTIONS ON EXPLORATION**

[8.11] After moving your character into a new box, determine the contents of the box.

[8.12] Roll two dice, taking one roll as the first digit of a number and the other as the second; refer to the paragraph of the same number.

[8.13] Read the section of the paragraph labelled with the type of box your character has entered (Accessway, Accommodations, Corridor, Industrial, Service).

[8.14] Some paragraphs stipulate that a box is impassable. In such a case, place an Impassable Room marker in the box and move the character back to the box from which he entered. He may re-enter the box now or at a later Game-Turn.

[8.15] If your character rolled for an Accessway box and then moved from the box to a different deck, do not roll again for the new box; if it of the same type (mill-grav, be, levator, or whatever) as the box you left and contains nothing of interest.

[# 2] PREVIOUSLY VISITED BOXES AND CHARACTERS

[# 2.1] If a character moves through a door or enters a box for which his previously rolled in determines a paragraph number, do not roll again. Presumably, you or that character dealt with the contents of the box or the door or his previous visit, and so he does not investigate it. Necessary. You should find that you rarely forget which boxes your character has visited; if, however, you do forget whether or not he has visited a box, roll for this box or the character that he did not.

[# 2.2] If a paragraph states that your character at counters to a character you know to be dead or who is currently accompanying your character, ignore the paragraph. The room is empty of characters, although other specifics of the paragraph description may still apply.

[8.3] ALERTNESS CHECKS

[8.3.1] A paragraph may require a being to undergo an Alertness Check.

[8.3.2] To resolve a check, roll two dice, add the numbers rolled together, and compare the resulting total to the being's Alertness Rating. If the number is equal to or less than the Alertness Rating, the being has passed the check. Otherwise, he has failed. The paragraph will stipulate the effect of passing or failing a check.

[8.3.3] Note that the Alertness Ratings for Jim and Angelina are variable, while the Alertness Ratings of all other beings are constant (except when changed, see 2.42).

[9.0] Clues**CASES:****[9.1] VOLUNTEERED CLUES**

[9.1.1] At your character's investigation a box, you may be instructed to refer to a Villain Chart. **Example:** You will be told to "refer to Villain Chart #3." If this case, find the Villain Chart with the ID number specified by the paragraph. Note that there are six Villain Charts for each ID number; however, at the beginning of the game, you will have discarded five out of six. Take the Villain Chart from this stack you chose at the beginning of the game.

[9.1.2] On each Villain Chart, six three-digit numbers are printed (see 2.3). For the three-digit numbers corresponding to the number of the Die Roll Chart. For example, if the Die Roll Chart number is 1, refer to the first number of the Villain Chart; if it is 4, refer to the fourth number; and so forth.

[9.1.3] Refer to the paragraph corresponding to the number found on the Villain Chart. **Example:** If the number is 068, refer to paragraph 068. This paragraph will give you a piece of information — a clue. Even if you will be told a number of clues it is from them, you must try to list all the clues.

[9.2] STUMBLING OVER CLUES

During interaction in any Game-Turn, you may choose to "stumble over" a clue. Spend 5 Strepson of Die Roll Points and move the Die Roll markers accordingly; then refer to the Villain Chart of your choice and to the appropriate paragraph. You may stumble over only one clue per Game-Turn (Exception, see 16.2).

[10.0] Combat: Set-Up and Initiative**CASES:****[10.1] SET-UP**

[10.1.1] All combat takes place on out of the Tactical Displays. If your character is Jim, use the Jim display; if your character is Angelina, use the Angelina display. If both main characters are engaging in combat in the same room, use either display and set the counter of the other character on the display in the same manner as counters for minor characters at robots. The position of each main character is assumed to be the center of the display, and other beings are placed in the economic rings surrounding his position.

[10.1.2] Outside the center position, the display is divided into 12 boxes. Three concentric circles — labelled Near, Middle, and Far — are each divided into four quadrants — front, rear, left, and right. Consequently, there are 12 possible positions around the central character.

[10.1.3] When combat is initiated, a paragraph will describe the deployment of opposing robots and characters. It will state the number and type of robots to be deployed and the names of the characters, the boxes on the display in which they are deployed, and

the facing. **Example:** "Securibot, middle left, rear." It tells you to place a Securibot counter in the middle ring in the left quadrant of the display and to orient its counter so that the being's feet or the counter point away from the center (i.e., toward the Far ring).

[10.1.4] Beings accompanying your main character will already be deployed on the Tactical Display with a combat beginning, see Reorganization, 15.0.

[10.1.5] You will note that the robot at characters counters are double-sized. When facing inward or outward they will overlap the box boundaries. It should nevertheless be possible to portray these counters in such that their position on the display is clear.

[10.2] INITIATIVE

[10.2.1] The order in which beings (main characters included) move and attack is determined by their Alertness Ratings. The being with the highest Alertness Rating moves and attacks first, followed by the being with the next highest, and so forth. Note that Jim's and Angelina's Alertness Ratings depend on the current positions of their Alertness markers; the Alertness Ratings of all other characters at robots are printed on their counters (see 2.3).

[10.2.2] If two or more beings have the same Alertness Rating, they move and attack in the following order:

1. Main characters (Jim and Angelina)
2. Beings accompanying main characters
3. Other characters
4. Other robots

Note that there may be more than one being in each category, in such a case, you must decide which is first.

[10.2.3] A stunned being's Alertness Rating is always 3 less than its printed rating. This rule does not apply to Jim and Angelina.

[11.0] Combat: Movement**CASES:****[11.1] FACING**

[11.1.1] During the movement portion of a Being Segment, the being may either change its facing by 90° or move or be on the Tactical Display, but not both.

[11.1.2] The facing of a being other than Jim or Angelina is changed by rotating its counter. **Example:** A being facing clockwise on the display could rotate to face inward or outward, but not counterclockwise.

[11.1.3] The facing of the character at the center of the display (Jim or Angelina) is changed by moving all of the other counters on the display. **Example:** If you want your character to turn left to face the counters in his left quadrant, move all counters on the display one quadrant in a clockwise direction. Thus, the counters which were in his left quadrant are now in his front quadrant; he has turned to the left. If he turned right, all counters would be moved counterclockwise. Note that counters remain in the same

ring, but that gets admissions. Remember, when turning Jim, to maintain the same facing for characters and robots who change quadrants (e.g., a robot that faces counterclockwise in Jim's left quadrant continues to face counterclockwise or clockwise in his front quadrant).

[11.2] MOVEMENT

[11.21] A being may move out of a box in the direction it faces only. For beings other than the main character, move the being's pointer to the box its head points toward. It may not move into any other box. If the being is the main character, move all beings to the front quadrant one box toward (i.e., toward the center of the display) — except that being already in the Near Forward box remains there — and move all beings to the rear quadrant one box away from the center — except that beings already in the Far Rear box remain there. Being in the left or right quadrant do not move. No facts are changed. **Example:** There are beings in the Near Forward box, the Far Rear box, the Left Middle box, the Right Far box, the Far Forward box, and the Middle Rear box. The front four being are not moved. The Far Forward being is moved to the Middle Forward box and the Middle Rear being is moved to the Far Rear box.

[11.22] There may be any number of beings in a given box (although only the main character may occupy the rear position).

[11.3] UNCONTROLLED BEINGS

[11.31] Characters and robots which are fighting your main character follow a rigid movement procedure. You make no choices for beings you do not control.

[11.32] During the movement portion of such being's Being Segment, it will move only in accordance to the following schedule of preferences — i.e., if J applies, it will follow the instruction of J; if not, and 2 applies, it will perform 2, etc.

1. If the being is not facing inward, it turns inward. (Note, for example, that if it were facing outward, you could choose whether to turn it clockwise or counterclockwise.)

2. If the being has a Fire Combat Value or equipment with such a value, it does nothing.

3. If the being is in a box containing an enemy being (i.e., one you control), it does nothing.

4. Otherwise, it moves one box inward. (If in the Near Box, it does nothing.)

[11.33] Guards, unlike other robots, may never move, they may turn, however.

[12.0] Combat: Resolution and Equipment

CASES:

[12.1] HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT

[12.11] If, during the equipment portion of the Being Segment, a being is in a box on the

display containing an enemy being, it must engage the enemy being in hand-to-hand combat. Your character and all characters at the robot's discretion control enemy to all other beings, and vice versa.

[12.12] If there are two or more enemy beings in a box, you may decide which of them is attacked.

[12.13] If at the beginning of a combat box and facing toward, it must engage your main character; this rule supersedes the preceding.

[12.14] Each being has a Hand-to-Hand Combat Strength. The strength of each robot is printed on its armor (see 2.3). Character strengths are printed on their combat cards as well. These character strengths may be used only when a character is in direct combat against a hand-to-hand attacker or when it does or has enemy equipment to Hand. When a character attacks with equipment to Hand, it uses the Combat Strength printed on the equipment card rather than its own. **Exception:** When Jim or Angelina is attacked by a being in the Near Front box, the Combat Strength of equipment to Hand (if it is used to defend, not the character's Combat Strength)

Jim Strength 9 ★ 4

Angelina Strength 9 ★ 5

The main characters, unlike others, use their printed strengths if defense only when attacked from the rear or side or when they have no equipment to Hand.

[12.15] To resolve a hand-to-hand attack, subtract the Hand-to-Hand Combat Strength of the being subject to the attack from the strength of the attacking being. Refer to the Hand-to-Hand Combat Effects Table (12.16) Find the number calculated at the top of the table. Roll a die, find the number rolled along the left-hand side. Cross-reference the combat differential with the die-roll to yield a result. Combat results are explained in 12.4.

[12.16] Hand-to-Hand Combat Effects Table (see mapsheet)

[12.2] FIRE COMBAT

[12.21] If a being is not required to engage in hand-to-hand combat and has a fire weapon or Fire Combat Value, it may engage in fire combat instead.

[12.22] Some robots and some piece of equipment have Fire Combat Values (see 2.3). A robot whose combat has Fire Combat Value is considered to have a fire weapon; a character has a fire weapon if he has a piece of equipment with such a value to Hand.

[12.23] A being facing clockwise or counterclockwise relative to your main character may fire into any of the three boxes in the quadrant toward which it faces. **Example:** A being in the Middle Right box facing counterclockwise could fire into any of the three forward boxes.

[12.24] A being facing outward or inward may fire into the first occupied box in the being's quadrant in the direction it faces. **Example:** A being in the Far Forward box could fire into the Middle Forward box, the Near Forward box, or at the main character, if,

however, the Middle Forward box were occupied, the being could not only fire to that box but not to either.

[12.25] Beings may only fire at enemy beings. Only one being is the target of a given fire attack. You may decide what being is the target if there is more than one possibility. However, a being you do not control will automatically fire at your main character when ever possible.

[12.26] To resolve fire combat, find the Fire Combat Value of the firing being or equipment at the top of the Weapon Table (12.28). Roll two dice, add the rolls together, and find the number along the left-hand side of the table. Cross-reference the die roll at the Fire Combat Value to yield a combat result. (Effects are explained in 12.4.)

[12.27] If one of your main characters is in the wounded, subtract J from the Weapon Table die roll which he uses a weapon. If both arms are wounded, subtract 13.

[12.28] Weapon Table (see mapsheet)

[12.3] SPECIAL FIRE COMBAT RULES

[12.31] Characters use combat differently from other kinds of equipment with Fire Combat Values. A character with a great ability to Hand may throw the grenade into a box into which he could fire. All beings in that box are subject to a grenade attack; results are for other kinds of fire combat. A grenade thrown by your main character (but not by all being in the Near boxes). The great aid is removed from play after the effects are determined.

[12.32] Characters and great grenades have no effect on robots or characters wearing protective suits or breath masks. Gas does affect unprotected characters; mallets cannot get suits or a protector against gas.

[12.33] The Bandster's weapon, unlike those of other robots, may become unloaded. The Bandster has an S rated weapon because he carries a supply of shot glasses which he may propel at great speed. This capability is generally used to slide glasses down a bar, but provides a mallet maker's weapon. A Bandster becomes unloaded in the same way as other weapons; Bandsters may never be reloaded in the course of the game, though they may, of course, engage in hand-to-hand combat.

[12.4] COMBAT EFFECTS

[12.41] At a result of hand-to-hand or fire combat, a being may suffer a combat result of S or D or no effect at all.

[12.42] An S result stuns the target being; if it is a character, flip the counter over to its stunned side; if it is a robot, place a Robot Stunned marker on the robot's counter. A stunned being loses the equipment portion of its Being Segment. It may move and change facing, but cannot initiate hand-to-hand or fire combat or exchange equipment. At the end of its next Equipment Segment, it becomes unstunned. The Alertness Rating of a stunned being is reduced by 3 for malleting purposes. **Exception:** Jim and Angelina do not suffer a temporary loss of J Alertness Points if stunned. Instead, they lose 1 Alertness Point permanently, move the Alertness marker to the next tile loss.

[12.43] A **D**estitute destroys or kills the target being. Remove its counter from play. **Exception:** Jim and Angelina are not killed by **D**estitute, but are wounded instead. Roll dice and refer to this Wound Table (12.27). The counter corresponding to the die roll will indicate the area of the character's body which is wounded. Flip over the appropriate body part counter on the Tactical Display at the wounded side. If a character is subsequently wounded at the same body area, roll on the Wound Table at that wounded body area is rolled. A character wounded in all six body areas is dead. A **D**estitute as a character is not to mail armor, and does not have the **2** Alertness Point.

[12.44] A rest it on the Weapon's Table marked with an asterisk (*) indicates that the firing weapon is unloaded. Flip the weapon counter over to its unloaded side. Unloaded weapons may not be used to deliver combat attacks. Robots may never become unloaded. **(Exception: 12.33.)** Weapon counter may be reloaded to reload a loaded weapon; see 13.2.

[12.45] Your character may wound a unit result by spending 2 Suspicion of Diceless Points, or an odd word by spending 5. Move the Suspicion of Diceless markers to reflect the expenditure and ignore the effects of the combat result.

[12.46] A stunned being remains stunned until the end of its next Equipment Segment. At that time, remove the Robot Stunned marker or flip the character to its stunned side.

[12.47] **Wound Table** [see map three]

[12.5] EQUIPMENT

[12.51] Characters other than Jim and Angelina may wear or carry one piece of equipment each. This piece of equipment may either be To Hand (represented by placing the equipment counter on top of the character counter) or On Body (represented by placing it beneath the character counter).

[12.52] During a character's equipment portion of its Equipment Segment, it may swap one piece of equipment in the To Hand box for a piece of equipment in its On Body box. A character who switches equipment may not also engage in hand-to-hand or fire combat.

[12.53] Jim and Angelina may each carry nine (or more) pieces of equipment. During an Equipment Segment, either may (a) swap the contents of his To Hand box for the contents of an On Body box, or (b) swap the contents of an On Body box for the contents of a Leg Sheath box. Note that one of the involved boxes in a swap can be empty. Note also that it collectively takes two Combat Points to move a piece of equipment from a Leg Sheath to a To Hand box. A character who exchanges equipment may not also engage in hand-to-hand or fire combat.

[12.54] If a friendly character is in a near box, your main character and he may swap the equipment they each have. To hand. Neither character may otherwise exchange equipment, fire, or engage in hand-to-hand combat during the same Combat Round. Similarly, two characters you control in the same box may swap equipment To Hand. Jim or Angelina may swap equipment with one (only) character per Equipment Segment.

[12.55] Robots may never carry equipment.

[12.6] UNCONTROLLED BEINGS

[12.61] Belongs to you do not control. Follow rigid procedure for the Equipment Segment, you make it a house for being you do not control.

[12.62] When it is the Equipment Segment of a being you do not control, refer to the Enemy Equipment Flowchart.

[12.63] Look at the question at the upper left-hand side of the flowchart. Answer the question to your mind, and follow or branch off the chart beneath the question, depending on the answer. This will lead either to an instruction, or to another question. If the branch leads to an instruction, follow the instruction. If answering a question or the flowchart leads to another question, answer that question and continue answering questions and moving down the flowchart until an instruction is reached. Follow that instruction; the Segment for the being is now over.

[12.64] Enemy Equipment Flowchart

[see page 16]

[13.0] Special Equipment Rules

CASES

[13.1] ELECTRIC PROD

Although the electric prod is listed on the Weapon Table, it is not a fire combat weapon. It is used exclusively in hand-to-hand combat. When a character with a prod To Hand initiates a hand-to-hand attack, roll on the Weapon Table under the **E** column and apply the result to his target, instead of resolving the attack normally.

[13.2] RELOADING WEAPONS

If Jim or Angelina has a weapon reload. Or Body for a weapon that is To Hand, he may expend the weapon reload (remove it from play) and reload the weapon during the equipment portion of the Basic Segment. Flip the weapon counter over to its loaded side. Reloading a weapon takes a full Equipment Segment, during which time no other action may be taken. Unloaded weapons may also be reloaded during Reorganization.

[13.3] CIGARS

If a character has a hand-to-hand and no Equipment Segment, he may light a cigar. For the remainder of the Interaction (i.e., for the rest of the combat in which the cigar is lit), he is unburdened from all Weapons Table die-roll when the character is subjected to fire from an **L** or **IR** weapon. He need not keep the hand-to-hand to Hand to continue receiving this benefit. This rule represents the attenuating effects of smoke on laser fire. The hand-to-hand is considered to contain an unlimited number of cigars, to which character may smoke a cigar each time he enters combat (if you like).

[13.4] SUITS

If the target of fire from an **L** or **LR** weapon is

wearing a suit with reflective armor, it is subtracted from the die roll of the Weapon's Table. If the target of fire combat attack from a **S** or **SG** weapon or is reflective armor, it is subtracted from the die roll of the Weapon's Table. Robots and characters wearing reflective armor are not affected by fire or grenades. A reflective suit does not protect against gas, but still reflects fire, making it less effective to body armor.

[13.5] ROBOT SLAVERS

Robot slavers, unlike all other kinds of equipment, have two Combat Strengths. The first is for use against characters, and the second for use against robots. If a character with a robot slaver To Hand initiates a combat with a robot, you immediately gain control of the robot, and refer it to the remainder of the game.

[13.6] GRENADES

Illumination Grenades: When combat occurs in a dark area (see 14.2), a character may throw an illumination grenade into any box or the Tactical Display. For the remainder of the combat, the display is illuminated; darkness rules cease to apply.

Smoke Grenades: Smoke grenades are thrown in the same manner as other grenades. A box or the Tactical Display to which a smoke grenade is thrown is considered full of smoke for the remainder of the combat; beings in smoke-filled boxes are subject to darkness rules (14.2), and do not get outside smoke-filled boxes may not fire or go through them boxes.

[13.7] NOSTRUMS

[13.71] First Aid Kits and Patch Piles: During Reorganization, your character may expend either of these pieces of equipment to cure one wound. Remove the equipment counter from play, and flip over a Wound marker to its unwounded side. Alertness Point lost at a result of a wound are not restored by first aid kits or patch piles.

[13.72] Snatch and Pop Pills: During Reorganization, your character may expend either of these pieces of equipment to increase your character's Alertness Rating by two points. Move the Alertness marker to reflect this increase. The increase is considered permanent within the scope of the game. Your character may increase his Alertness above 9. If he does so, flip the Alertness marker over to the +10 side and assume that the Alertness Rating is actually 10 greater than indicated by the marker's position.

[13.8] MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT

[13.81] Flashlight: A character with a flashlight On Body may ignore the effects of darkness (14.2), but not the effects of smoke.

[13.82] Insulated Gloves: Some paragraphs describe electrified doors. If your character has insulated gloves To Hand when you touch such a paragraph, he is protected against the effects of electrification.

[13.83] Lockpick: Some paragraphs describe locked doors. If

this is the *Use*, and your character has the lockpick, you may immediately swap the equipment your character has to that with the lockpick. The door will now open (but your character will have the lockpick To Hand, which may not be terribly useful if the room has a lot of nasty enemies).

[13.84] Monofilament Solvent

Some paragraph describes doors strung with morofilament traps. Morofilament is a molecule-thin fiber capable of cutting through almost anything. Your character will be unable to move through such a door unless he has the morofilament solvent. The solvent is removed from play in the door becomes passable.

[14.0] Vacuum and Darkness

CASES:

[14.1] VACUUM

[14.1.1] Some paragraphs stipulate that a box is vacuum-filled. If your character enters such a box from one that does not contain vacuum, he (and all beings with him) is subjected to decompression.

[14.1.2] For each robot and for each character wearing a flight suit, roll two dice and refer to the Decompression Table (14.3). Fit the entry on the table corresponding to the die roll.

[14.1.3] For each character without a suit or with a malfunctioning suit, roll one die, add 6 to the die roll, and refer to the Decompression Table.

[14.1.4] A result of Equipment Breakage means that one piece of equipment carried by the character (if any) is destroyed and removed from the game (you may decide which); a result of Suit Malfunction means that the character's suit (if any) is no longer airtight; flip the result or refer to the Malfunction table. Other results may alter the combat rest level.

[14.2] DARKNESS

[14.2.1] Some paragraphs stipulate that a box is dark. When combat occurs in such a box, hand-to-hand combat is unaffected, but movement is affected.

[14.2.2] During a being's Movement Segment, roll a die; on a roll of 1 or 2, the being is left; on a roll of 3 or 4, it moves ahead; on a roll of 5 or 6, it moves right. This rule applies to major characters as well as other beings on the display.

[14.2.3] During a being's Equipment Segment, it will engage in hand-to-hand combat if possible; otherwise, it will automatically fire a weapon or throw a grenade if it can. A character will fire a weapon if it has one To Hand. The weapon is fired forward. If there is a being in the line of fire (regardless of whether it is friendly or enemy), it is subject to fire combat attack. If there is more than one potential target, determine which is to be the target of the attack by some random method.

[14.1] DECOMPRESSION TABLE (see mapsheet)

[15.0] Reorganization

PROCEDURE:

During Reorganization, determine what equipment is available, including equipment in the room according to the paragraph description and equipment carried by defeated enemies. You need not pay Suspension of Disbelief Points for equipment you pick up while in the space station. Then, exchange and allocate equipment as you wish. Equipment may be moved from box to box on the Tactical Display, sent to or taken from friendly characters, etc. The only limitation on the limitations on the amount of equipment each character may carry. At any time, you may increase the carrying capacity of your main character by one piece of equipment by spending 5 Suspension of Disbelief Points. Note that taking more than one piece of equipment actually increases your character's carrying capacity for the rest of the game.

If you leave any equipment behind, place the equipment or items in the box or the Space Station map. You may retrieve at a later Game-Turn in order to pick it up if you wish. Jim and Angelita may remove their vac in suits if you wish. Removing equipment from empty boxes on the Tactical Display which may be used to hold another piece of equipment. The "suit" box becomes an On Back box, and is treated in the same manner as Leg Sheath boxes. At most may be used to hold one Reorganization or any subsequent Game-Turn. Most characters may not carry two pieces of equipment by forgetting it.

Once equipment is dealt with, arrange all characters and robots on the tactical display or the Tactical Display. The collection of beings accompanying your character are always placed on the Tactical Display. They may have any facing and may be in any quadrant(s), but must always be placed in near boxes. During Reorganization, you may freely change the positions of friendly beings, within these restrictions.

[16.0] Deactivating the Computer and Winning

CASES:

[16.1] DEACTIVATING THE COMPUTER

[16.1.1] The computer is located in box B26. When your character enters this box, it immediately to paragraph 75. Once you have followed the instructions of that paragraph, the computer is considered deactivated.

[16.1.2] Immediately after deactivating the computer, you may "sumble over" any number of clues (see 9.7).

[16.2] IDENTIFYING THE VILLAIN

[16.2.1] Once you have deactivated the computer, you must attempt to identify the villain. State your best guess as to the villain's identity, then flip over the Villain Chart.

[16.2.2] Refer to the Villain Matrix (16.23) and cross-reference the ID letter on the Villain Chart with the number of the Die Roll Chart in the Die Roll Chart Holding Box. This will yield a three-digit number.

[16.2.3] The three-digit number from the Matrix is the suspension number which identifies the villain. Refer to this paragraph and find out whether you were correct.

[16.2.4] If your guess was correct, and your Suspension of Disbelief Index is 75 or below, you have won the game.

[16.25] Villain Matrix (see mapsheet)

[16.3] SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF

[16.3.1] If, at any point, your character dies, the Suspension of Disbelief Index exceeds 75, or you incorrectly identify the villain, you have lost the game.

[16.3.2] Add 5 Suspension of Disbelief Points for each character your main character killed during the game. You lose no points if (a) you "battled" the character with gas (which actually checks out the character for the duration of the game), or (b) the character attacked your character first.

[17.0] Playing with Two Players

GENERAL RULE:

If two people wish to play *Return of the Stainless Steel Rat*, one play Jim and the other Angelina. Each has his own Tactical Display.

PROCEDURE:

During set-up, the two players alternate choosing equipment, so each has a fair chance to choose equipment he wants.

The players' characters must enter in different points on the Space Station Map.

During the game, the players alternate Game-Turns.

If one player's character enters a box previously visited by the other player's character, the box will be empty save for equipment left by the first player.

The two players may not engage in combat with one another.

If the two players' characters meet one another, they may, at the player's option, move together; the players then take each Game-Turn in the same time. They engage in combat together; place one of their characters in or on the Tactical Display of the other, in the same manner as for most characters. When a enemy being is directed to attack a "major character," it should attack either Jim or Angelina, whichever is nearer.

When a player's character deactivates the computer, he immediately has a chance to identify the villain. If he does so successfully (and his Suspension of Disbelief Index is 75 or less), he has won; otherwise, he has lost. If he loses, the other player must immediately attempt to identify the villain the same way as many clues as he likes before he does so; if he correctly identifies the villain and his Suspension of Disbelief Index is 75 or less, he has won. Otherwise, he has lost as well; it is possible for both players to lose.

Note that both players use the same set of Villain Chart.



EVENT PARAGRAPHS

These paragraphs, arranged numerically from Q91 to 225, are the heart of *The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat*. It is strongly recommended that the player **not read through** the entire Paragraphs Section; examination of the paragraphs, other than those to which you are referred during play of the game, will destroy the element of surprise that is so important to the game.

Note that, when a paragraph refers to the introduction of another paragraph, the symbology "►-#" is used to indicate the new paragraph number.

001. Monofluoromethylenes is the deg. opening. The charcoal has failed to see the extremely thin wall and has tried to enter the room. He has been out of the monofluoromethane inlet at D results. The monofluoromethane may be dissolved by solvent. If no solvent is available, the door is impassable.

002. As the door begins to open, is the door opened beneath the feet of the character, is the opening character, is anyone other than Jim or Angelina, the character falls through the gap door and disappears. The remainder of the group was kept over the gap and went through the door. Is Jim or Angelina is the opening character. # 065

Casting Notes: I need over-the-top and inferior components, malcontent. Discard later.

003. The locomotive is a full grain tube. However, the gravity is on. The shifter noticed that before sleeping on over empty space. He suffers no effects, but the railroad man DUBBS used to move to another deck.

Cutting Laser The character drops the laser and something goes wrong. In broken Discard h.

Cutting Laser: While cutting into the floor or wall, the laser cuts into a water vent. The laser is short-circuited. Roll a die for each robot you control on it. If that robot is short-circuited as well. Remove the laser and short-circuited robots from play.

005. The elevator works jerkily, but satisfactorily.

006. Your characters are on p. A Deck.

Cutting Laser-Chemical outcrops in melting breath

Cutting Layer: Chest (sterilized) in mating brace

Q00: In explosion racks through the elevator, a charge on the side has blown. If the emergency is on C Deck, it is now inoperable. Otherwise it plummets to C Deck and is therefore inoperable; not a die for each being of the elevator 1-4; on effect, 5-8 ID

Carving Laser: Character succeeds in melting breach

009. Jen or Angelina falls into the box on the Space Station map one deck below his current box. None of the characters and robots fall with him and he is separated from them. The new box contains 2 Securitys like your maindeck, middle left maindeck and 1 Heavy Gun (middle left maindeck).

Cutting Losses: Character succeeds in making friends.

010. Monoplymanti-ma closed the door opening. The character saw the extremely ill wife, and caught himself before walking through it. However, the monoplymanti makes the door impassable. It may not be used especially

Cutting Lower: While cutting the vest or ceiling, the character is splashed by molten metal. If he is wearing h

NUM, the sub program has malfunctions (tip he number) Otherwise, the character suffix is D repeat is break as successfully made

011. Accessway: Choose one being to enter the squid. That being makes an Awareness Check. If a success, **009** happens. **086**.

Accommodations: There is an Olympic size swimming pool in this room with beach chairs around it and a bar at the main entrance. A dead body is lying face down in the center of the pool. If you enter, P-125; otherwise, mouse click on the bar.

Caution: There is a communications device along the side of the corridor. You may ignore it (in which case conditions play) or speak into it (in which case ■ 072h).

gloves, roll on the Waspone 1000 under electric prod and look for the result to the character.

— only vacuum. The base is a huge cavern open to the sky with garages and docking ports scattered about. No ships are presently docked. You are immediately assigned to Lt. Sergeant Major Jifer from Alachua, 2 Salvadores that left inward, four right inward, and 1 Gentry (middle left) inward.

Service. You have an excellent seateroom containing goods for a gourmet picnic. Candy, cheese, wine, the nautical other goods are scattered about. You may obtain Scotch whisky or a humidor of cigars if you wish.

Earning Less: All you begin to eat, you lose the warranty on your lease run guildday. The lease promptly take it away from play.

Q12. Answer: Choose one being as enter the box
 Then be no moves as Answer Check: It passes, # 004,
 if it fails, # 007

Adventuromedalsone: You have entered Marsia's region, and a new amazing designer space equipment. All his sectors in your party will acquire vacuum suits and an anti-melting armor will replace theirs. He suits with collection of food items that are available. *Adventuromedalsone*

Corridor 1 Handyman is in the process of laying down a new pipe in the corridor. Thanks from Tuesday!

Deer: Deer is a chiba
Amur tiger: You have entered what seems to be an infinite metal foundry. The floor is covered with what seem to be perfectly round hot bathings. If you try to walk on this floor, you will slip and break yourself apart. The boss is impossible. Return to the bon from which you entered.

ADDRESS: 100th Ave just west of 130th St. is a newly opening one-room apartment with a pull down bed and small kitchenette. The Ritz Corp. is sitting on the land and the price

ing of you graciously. You may attack (■ H45) or begin a conversation (■ H43).

Cutting Laser: Someone forgot to replace the power-
pack on the laser. It's a Remington 8800.

013. Accessway: The accessway is an elevator. You may enter 15-0731 at times of fire, in which case you may not use the accessway hallway proposed.

Assessment: You have entered the Greep Gah Yoo Tongue, a restaurant specializing in Victorian cuisine. The empty in the kitchen is full of marzipan jars of pickled and cured greeps. Make an Assessment Check for your main show stop. In the passage, at 109, 116, 121, 126.

Corrector: The floor of the corridor is low. There is a rug of rug against one wall. Apparently the rug is shortly to be replaced. A container of monofilament solvent lies stop. There is a small table in the kitchen.

Order: Make an Alertness Check for the opening character in the character's name. If 00h, the passes — 01h **Insulted!** You have arrived at the airplane — a giant room filled with water and grass. Air bubbles through giant vials of algae, replenishing the oxygen and decomposing it.

Service. You have outstayed the snow-covered h at chalet-style patios in dangle purple and orange. One wall shade room is devoted to hideouts with glass ve down, in which get sandwiches, steas frozen hat meals, she ate like 3 Gersons (trash-middle clockwise, left inward), from ante inward and h Maid near near clockwise) at first you

014. Accessibility: The accessway is an elevator. You may decide not to build the which area, common play) or an area that will be more of 0061.

Accommodations: You have entered the Princess Suite, a private set of two bedrooms and living room with bay, gold-leaf panel, fireplace, marble sitting area and work space. This is the deluxe! We bring a new set of an old C. G. Bennett St. James place. You can, with a \$1,721

Comidor: The comidor is dark. You may move down it. (\rightarrow 074) or avoid it, or walk in case back out of the box

Industrial: You have entered a dark vacuum filled room with no gravity. Make an *Intermedia Check* for your inner character. If he passes, a *WJ* of 100 wins. If he fails, a *WJ* of 175.

Service: You have entered a control card of some kind. But at common address equipment repeatedly read the direct memory address 35353535. It is assumed that there is no buffer in the memory in addition that the controls will allow you to examine the contents of some portion of the station. You may wish to look into the three rooms of the station. Choose three boxes on the Space Station map for each, as per the normal procedure. Read the appropriate paragraph, then make a note of the alphanumerical numbers and the ID codes in the appropriate boxes. If you enter one of these boxes, refer to the appropriate paragraph marked following each.

Q15. Accessway. The emergency is an elevator. You may choose either enter it, in which case you may make the emergency, or you may call 2051.

Accommodations: The room is a hotel style single — closet-sized, upholstered in ugly colors, with a single bath. You may delegate everything to a maid to this room.

Clarification: This command is dark. As you enter it, a laser is fired toward you. You may release a response, # 134.

Lib! shout "who's there?" m m1, or let us use your flashlight
[assuming you have one] to see who is there. m 153

Door: Door open

Archambault—I'm in a large, well-lit room, the center of which is occupied by a massive, pulsating lump of flesh fed by nutrient tubes. The lump is, in fact, chicken meat being grown artificially. The lump also contains 17 farm-raised animals (mostly T. Cattle) from 10 different livestock, and 1 Stevardium (left over from experiments) which immediately attract you.

Savanna—You have entered a two-room apartment with a wall-sized video screen. Putti is sitting on a sofa bed reading Good Omens in Good Omens House. A 100 mg. rabbit (left over from the chicken) is in the room.

016. Accessory: Ted accessory is a stichem Delegam one bang to enter is end ■-077 Alternatively, unuse, deade, cum, i, t, d, i, n, g, i, s, h.



Accommodations: You have nestled in an empty two-room private apartment. A valuable Oriental carpet lies on the floor, and the furniture is of the classic, lacquered-

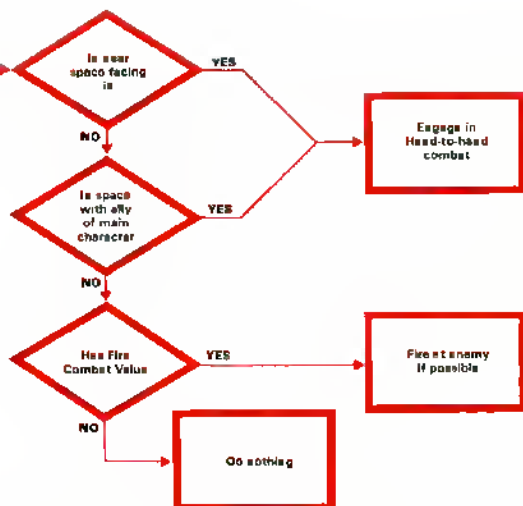
Caution: Along the side of the cord, on a box label

Door: The door opens

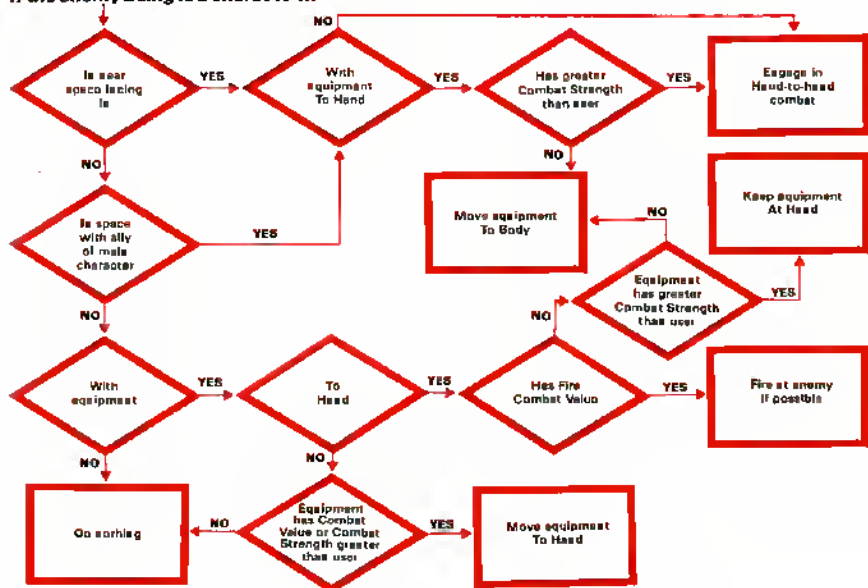
If the enemy being is a robot...

[12.64] Enemy Equipment Flowchart

-  Perform the indicated action.
-  Decide whether the condition applies (YES) or not (NO) and follow the arrow to the next decision or action.



If the enemy being is a character...



MAIN CHARACTERS

Joe Star ★ 4	Joe Armstrong ★ 1	Joe Armstrong ★ 10	Joe Armstrong ★ 10
Angela Star ★ 5	Angela Armstrong ★ 1	Angela Armstrong ★ 10	Angela Armstrong ★ 10

The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat Counter Section No. 1 (140 pieces) Front

Quantity of Sections of this Hatch Type in game 1. Total quantity of Section (all types) in game 1

Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3
Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3

Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3
Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3	Raymond ★ 3

Robert Star ★ 1	Robert Star ★ 1	Robert Star ★ 1
Robert Star ★ 1	Robert Star ★ 1	Robert Star ★ 1

EQUIPMENT

Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1
Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1

Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1
Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1

GAME MARKERS

Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1
Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1

Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1
Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1

Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1
Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1

VILLAIN CHITS AND SUSPECTS

Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1
Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1

Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1
Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1

Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1
Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1

Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1
Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1	Lower Ball ★ 1

The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat Counter Section No. 1 (140 pieces): Back

Star Star Star

Star Star Star

4 2 1 1

6 1 1 1

SWG101
2 • 3

SWG102
2 • 3

SWG103
2 • 3

SWG104
5 • 7

SWG105
5 • 7

SWG106
3 • 1

SWG107
3 • 7

LR Power
2 • 3

LR Power
1 • 3

LR Power
2 • 6

LR Power
2 • 6

LR Power
1 • 3

LR Power
4 • 6

LR Power
+ 10

LR Power
9

LR Power
+ 10

LR Power
9

SWG108
2 • 3

SWG109
M • 1

SWG110
M • 1

SWG111
M • 1

SWG112
M • 1

SWG113
M • 1

SWG114
M • 1

LR Power
2 • 3

LR Power
3 • 6

LR Power
1 • 4

LR Power
2 • 6

LR Power
1 • 4

LR Power
4 • 6

LR Power
+ 10

LR Power
9

LR Power
+ 10

LR Power
9

Body
W

Head
W

Leg
W

Body
W

Head
W

Leg
W

Leg
W

Arm
W

Arm
W

Leg
W

Arm
W

Arm
W

LR Power
2 • 3

LR Power
4 • 10

LR Power
4 • 10

LR Power
1 • 7

LR Power
2 • 3

LR Power
2 • 3

LR Power
2 • 1

LR Power
2 • 3

LR Power
5 • 9

LR Power
3 • 6

LR Power
2 • 1

LR Power
1 • 6

LR Power
1 • 6

LR Power
1 • 6

LR Power
1 • 4

LR Power
1 • 4

LR Power
1 • 4

LR Power
2 • 1

LR Power
2 • 4

LR Power
2 • 4

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

Carry
8 L 8

VILLAIN DIT
A

VILLAIN DIT
A

VILLAIN DIT
A

VILLAIN DIT
A

VILLAIN DIT
A

VILLAIN DIT
B

VILLAIN DIT
B

VILLAIN DIT
B

VILLAIN DIT
B

VILLAIN DIT
B

VILLAIN DIT
C

VILLAIN DIT
C

VILLAIN DIT
C

VILLAIN DIT
C

VILLAIN DIT
C

VILLAIN DIT
D

VILLAIN DIT
D

VILLAIN DIT
D

VILLAIN DIT
D

VILLAIN DIT
D

VILLAIN DIT
E

VILLAIN DIT
E

VILLAIN DIT
E

VILLAIN DIT
E

VILLAIN DIT
E

VILLAIN DIT
F

VILLAIN DIT
F

VILLAIN DIT
F

VILLAIN DIT
F

VILLAIN DIT
F

VILLAIN DIT
G

VILLAIN DIT
G

VILLAIN DIT
G

VILLAIN DIT
G

VILLAIN DIT
G

VILLAIN DIT
H

VILLAIN DIT
H

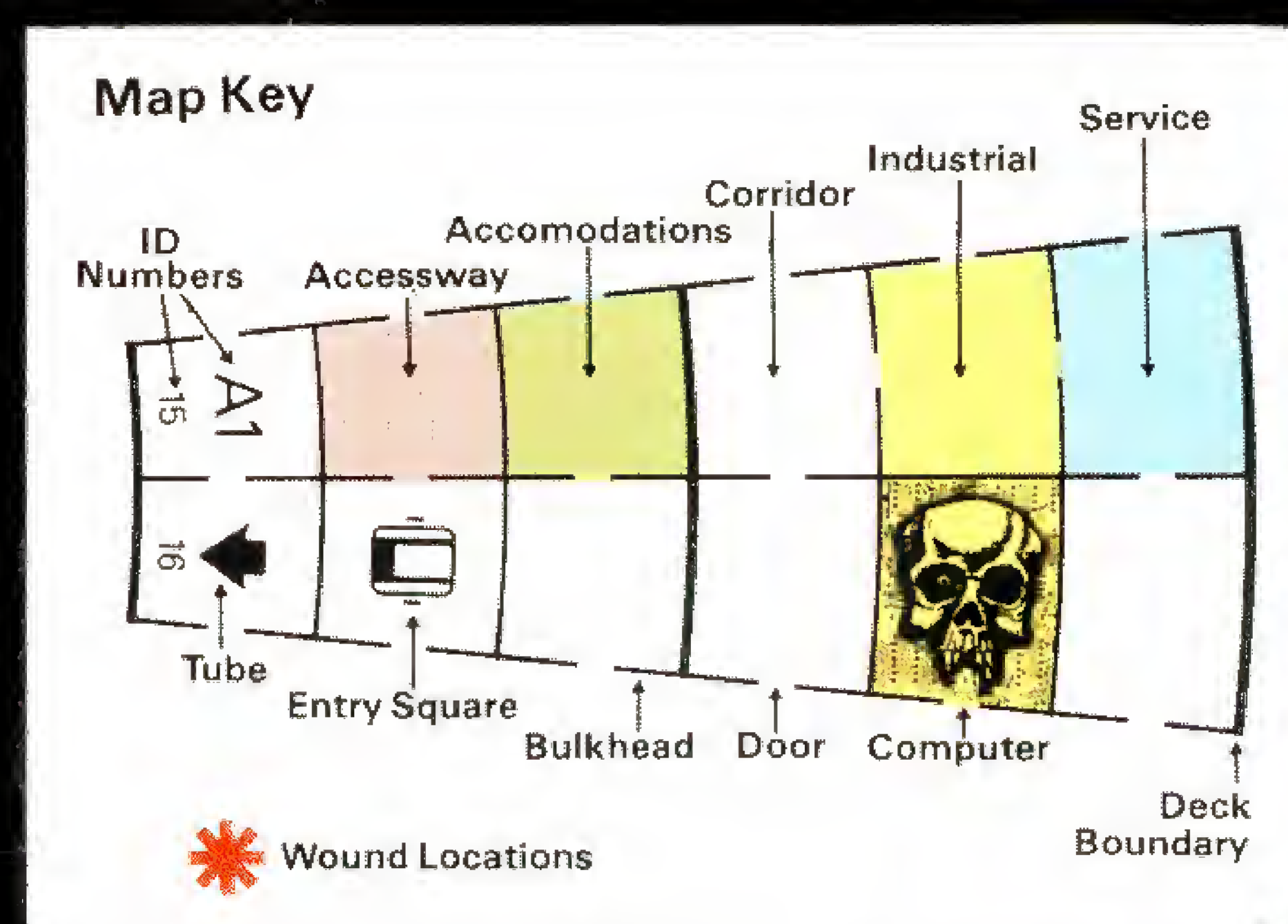
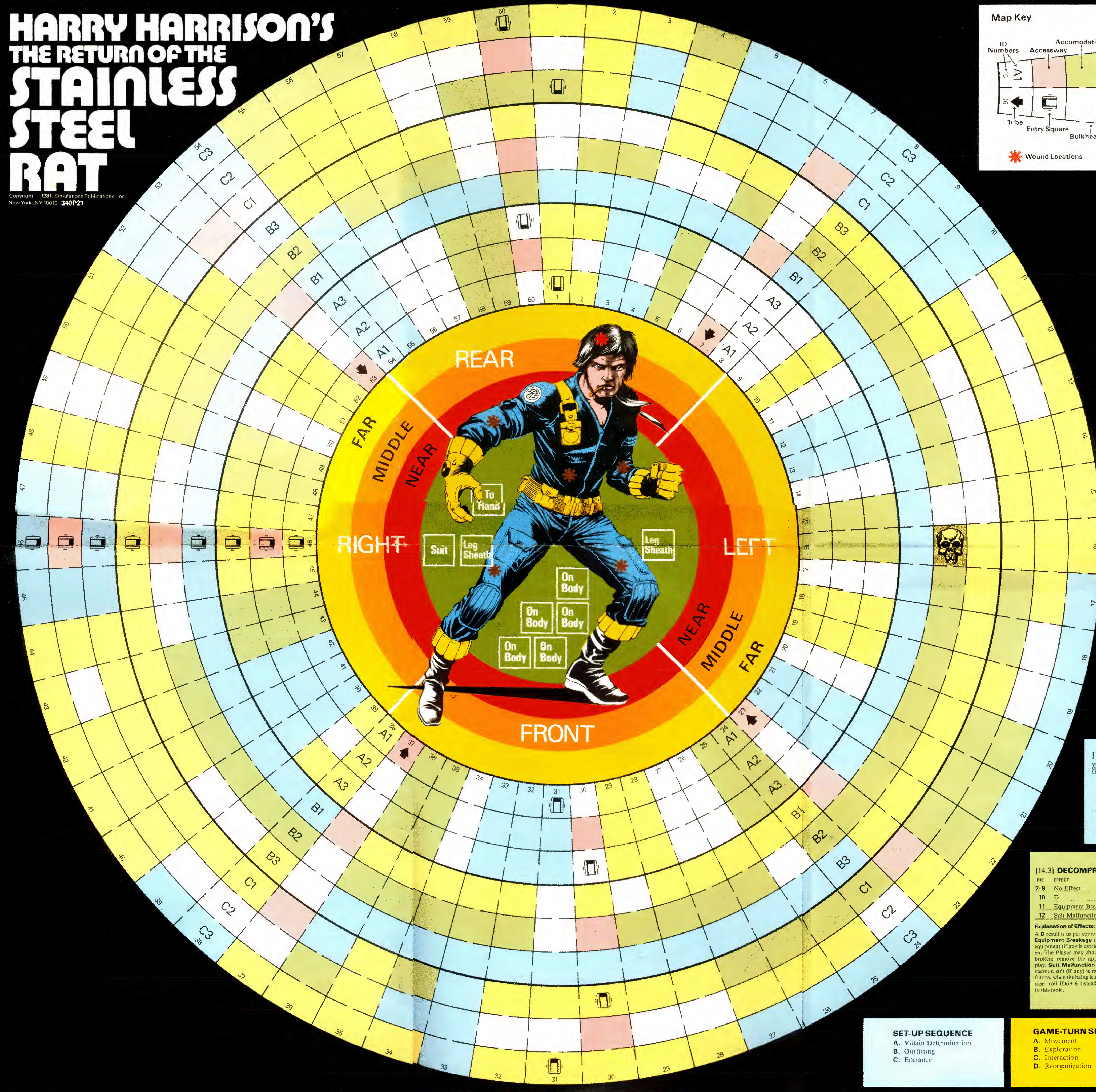
VILLAIN DIT
H

VILLAIN DIT
H

VILLAIN DIT
H

HARRY HARRISON'S THE RETURN OF THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT

Copyright © 1991, Simulation Publications, Inc.,
New York, NY 10010 340P21



Die-Roll Chit Box

Jim's Suspension of Disbelief Track

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Jim's Alertness Track

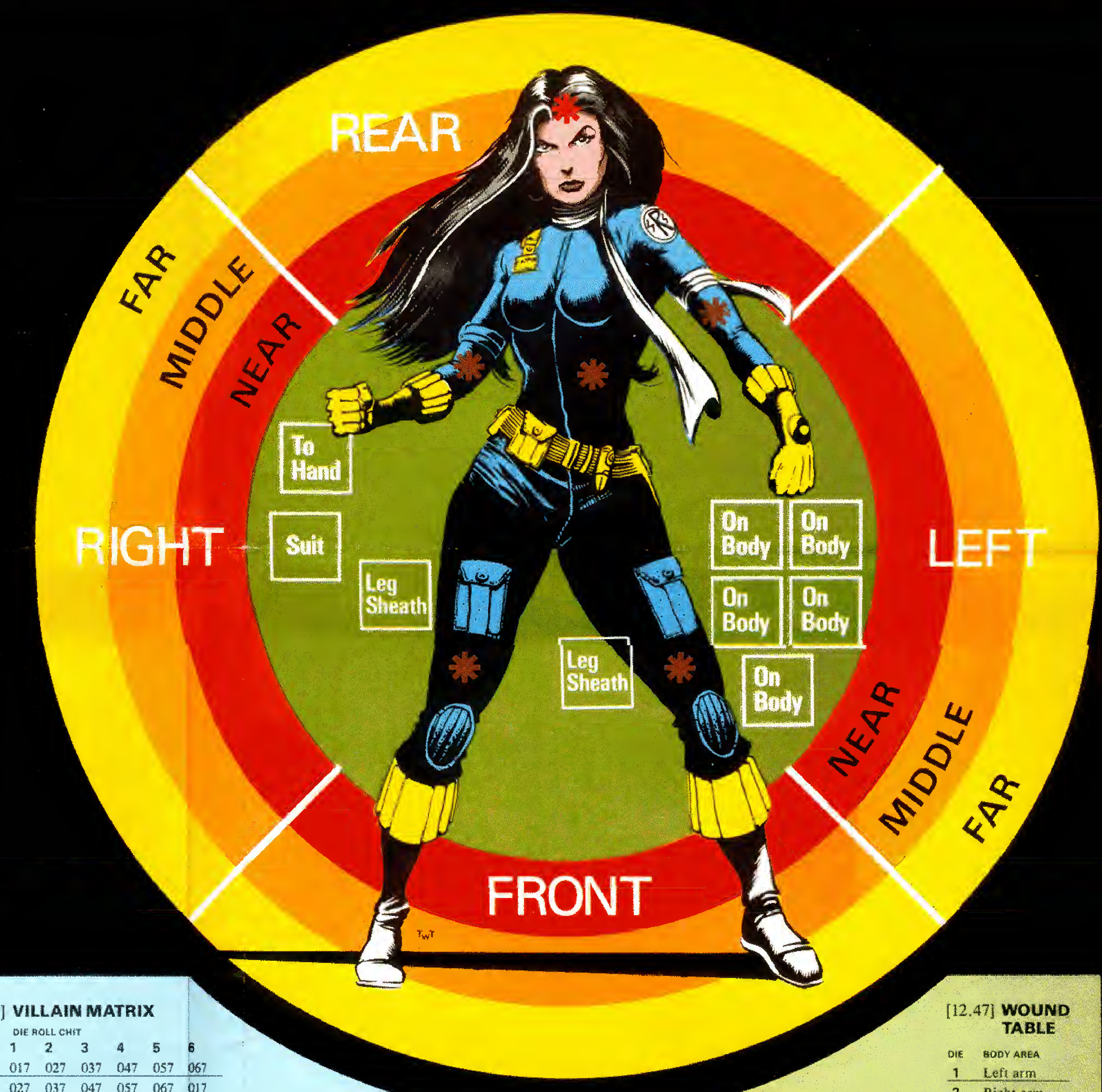
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Angelina's Suspension of Disbelief Track

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Angelina's Alertness Track

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---



[16.25] VILLAIN MATRIX

VILLAIN CHIT ID LETTER	1	2	3	4	5	6
A	017	027	037	047	057	067
B	027	037	047	057	067	017
C	037	047	057	067	017	027
D	047	057	067	017	027	037
E	057	067	017	027	037	047
F	067	017	027	037	047	057

Cross-reference the Die Roll Chit with the Villain Chit ID letter and refer to the indicated paragraph to find the villain's identity.

[12.47] WOUND TABLE

DIE	BODY AREA
1	Left arm
2	Right arm
3	Left leg
4	Right leg
5	Head
6	Body

Your character is wounded in the area indicated by the die roll; invert the appropriate counter on the mapsheet to the Wounded side. If you roll an area of the body that is already wounded, roll again.

[14.3] DECOMPRESSION TABLE

DIE	EFFECT
2-9	No Effect
10	D
11	Equipment Breakage
12	Suit Malfunction

Explanation of Effects:
A D result is as per combat results.
Equipment Breakage means that one piece of equipment (if any is carried by the being) is broken. The Player may choose which piece is to be broken; remove the appropriate counter from play. **Suit Malfunction** means that the being's vacuum suit (if any) is no longer airtight. In the future, when the being is subjected to Decompression, roll 1D6+6 instead of 2D6 when referring to this table.

[12.16] HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT EFFECTS TABLE

DIE	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

S: Defender stunned. D: Defender killed (if the defender is Jim or Angelina, a D result calls for a wound and causes the character's suit, if any, to malfunction). (-): No effect. A combat differential less than -4 is treated as -4; a combat differential greater than 7 is treated as 7.

[12.28] WEAPONS TABLE

DICE	Firearm	Explosive	Electrical	Gas	Laser	Laser Rifle	Shotgun	SMG
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

S: Stunned. D: Killed (Jim and Angelina wounded). (-): No effect. *Weapon unloaded.
Modifiers:
-3 if laser fire is used against reflective armor.
-3 if SMG or slugthrower is used against body armor.
-1 if laser fire is used against target smoking cigar.
Gas does not affect robots and characters with functioning suits.

SET-UP SEQUENCE
A. Villain Determination
B. Outfitting
C. Entrance

GAME-TURN SEQUENCE
A. Movement
B. Exploration
C. Interaction
D. Reorganization

COMBAT SEQUENCE
A. Initiative Determination Segment
B. First Being Segment
1. Movement
2. Equipment
C. Subsequent Being Segments